

ISLAM AS EMANCIPATOR OF WOMEN

Vol. I

Plight of Women and Historical
Review of Reforms

By
Muhammad Ashraf Chheenah

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated

Primarily to

The Almighty Allah

The All-Compassionate, The All-Merciful

And then to

The Feminine Gender

who had been the victims of
male exploitation throughout the world.

By the Same Author:

Hagar the Princess, 2012 (2nd Ed. 2016).

Israelites Versus Other Nations, (2012).

Slavery and Human Rights Through the Ages
Vol. I and Vol. II, (2017)

→ Forthcoming Books:

New World Order or Kingdom of God on Earth

Original Sin and Salvation

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Muhammad Ashraf Chheenah,
Chairman,
ISRC, Islamabad, 2019.

ABBREVIATIONS

AD/CE	anno domini (Latin), in the year of the Lord, Common/ Christian Era.
Ar	Arab, Arabia, Arabian, Arabic.
B	Bible.
BC	Before Christ; Bible Commentary; Biblical Commentary.
BCE	Before Christian/Common Era.
c/ca	About, approximately (Latin circa)
CE	Common Era: secular form of AD.
Ch	Chapter.
DB	Dictionary of the Bible.
Ed	Editor, edited by, edition.
Edn	Edition.
e.g./eg	for example (Latin exempli gratia).
Enc	Encyclopedia/Encyclopaedia/Encyclopedic.
Heb	Hebrew.
i.e.	that is, that means, namely.
MT/Mt	Massoretic / Masoretic Text of the OT; Matthew; Mount.
NT	New Testament of the Bible Contains 27 books: 4 Gospels, Acts, Epistles (letters), and lastly Revelations. It was originally written in Greek, whereas Jesus Christ delivered his message in the Aramaic language.
op.cit.	in the work already quoted (Latin opere citato).
OT	Old Testament of the Bible Consists of 39 books: The first five are collectively called the Pentateuch or Torah. It was originally written in Heb.
ﻋﻠﻴﻪ ﻭﺍﻟﻪ ﺳﻼﻡ	peace and blessings of Allah upon him.
p/pp	Page/pages.
P	Priestly tradition of the OT of the Bible.
Pbl/pbg	Publisher(s) Publication(s) /Publishing/.
Rvd	Revised.
St	Saint.
s.v.	Under the word or heading.
Tr.	Translator, translation, translated by.
Uni./Univ.	University.
v/vv	Verse/verses of the Bible.
V	Version (Tr.) of the Bible.
Vol.	Volume.
(...)	It indicates that some word, words, sentence, sentences, line, or lines have been left over from the original quotation.
(....)	It shows that a sizeable text has been omitted from the original quotation.
[]	The square brackets are used to insert something by the Tr./Ed., which did not originally exist in the quotation.
AV/KJV	Authorized Version/King James Version.
CCB	The Christian Community Bible (Manila: Divine Word Pbln, 1988).
CEV	Contemporary English Version (NY: American Bible Society, 1995).
GNB/TEV	Good News Bible/ Today's English Version -do-.
GNB:REV	Good News Bible (Revised Edn), Minto: The B. Society in Australia Inc. NSW.
LB	The Living Bible (Illinois: Tyndale House Pblshrs. 1976)
MT	The Torah, The Mesoretic Text (Jewish Pbln. Society of America).
NAB	New American Bible, Catholic Bible Association, 1991.
NASB	The New American Standard Bible, Cambridge Univ. Press 1977.

NEB	The New English Bible, Oxford Univ. Press, 1985.
NIV	New international Version, London, 1984.
NJB	The New Jerusalem Bible, Standard Edn, Bombay: St. Paul's, 1993.
NKJV	New King James Version.
NLTr.	New Living Translation, 1996:
NOAB.	The New Oxf. Annotated B:
NRSV.	New Revised Standard Version:
RSV.	Revised Standard Version.
RBV	Revised Berkeley Version:
Peshitta	The Authorised B. of the Church of the East, 1957.
Knox	Ronald A.Knox, Tr. From the Vulgate, Macmillan & Co. 1957

Abbreviations of the Books of the Bible

1. The Jewish Bible/OT

Abbreviation:	Book:	Abbreviation:	Book:
Amos or Am	Amos	Judg. or Jgs	Judges
1 Chron. or 1 Chr	1 Chronicles	1 Kings or 1 Kgs	1 Kings
2 Chron. or 2 Chr	2 Chronicles	2 Kings or 2 Kgs	2 Kings
Dan. or Dn	Daniel	Lam. or Lam	Lamentations
Deut. or Dt	Deuteronomy	Lev. or Lv	Leviticus
Eccles. or Eccl	Ecclesiastes	Mal. or Mal	Malachi
Esther or Est	Esther	Mic. or Mi	Micah
Exod. or Ex	Exodus	Nah. or Na	Nahum
Ezek. or Ez	Ezekiel	Neh. or Neh	Nehemiah
Ezra or Ezr	Ezra	Num. or Nm	Numbers
Gen. or Gn	Genesis	Obad. or Ob	Obadiah
Hab. or Hb	Habakkuk	Prov. or Prv	Proverbs
Hag. or Hg	Haggai	Ps. (pl.Pss.) or	Psalms
Hosea or Hos	Hosea	Ps (pl. Pss)	
Isa. or Is	Isaiah	Ruth or Ru	Ruth
Jer. or Jer	Jeremiah	1 Sam. or 1 Sm	1 Samuel
Job or Jb	Job	2 Sam. or 2 Sm	2 Samuel
Joel or Jl	Joel	Song of Sol. or	Song of Solomon (=Song of Songs)
Jon. or Jon	Jonah	Sg	
Josh. or Jo	Joshua	Zech. or Zec	Zechariah
		Zeph. or Zep	Zephaniah

2. The New Testament

Abbreviation:	Book:	Abbreviation:	Book:
Acts	Acts of the Apostles	Luke or Lk	Luke
Apoc.	Apocalypse (=Revelation)	Mark or Mk	Mark
Col. or Col	Colossians	Matt. or Mt	Matthew
1 Cor. or 1 Cor	1 Corinthians	1 Pet. or 1 Pt	1 Peter
2 Cor. or 2 Cor	2 Corinthians	2 Pet. or 2 Pt	2 Peter
Eph. or Eph	Ephesians	Philem. or Phlm	Philemon
Gal. or Gal	Galatians	Phil. or Phil	Philippians
Heb. or Heb	Hebrews	Rev. or Rv	Revelation (=Apocalypse)
James or Jas	James	Rom. or Rom	Romans
John or Jn	John (Gospel)	1Thess. or 1Thes	1 Thessalonians
1 John or 1 Jn	1 John (Epistle)	2Thess. or 2Thes	2 Thessalonians
2 John or 2 Jn	2 John (Epistle)	1 Tim. or 1 Tm	1 Timothy
3 John or 3 Jn	3 John (Epistle)	2 Tim. or 2 Tm	2 Timothy
Jude	Jude	Titus or Ti	Titus

PREFACE

The female gender had always been a victim to the exploitation and oppression of the males throughout the world. A glimpse of the same can be had by going through the first five chapters of this book. It's a pity that even the most civilized nations of the Old like that of the Greeks, Chinese and the Romans did not accept full humanity and independent personality of women nor did they grant them rights equal to men. The Western Christians, even those in the American continents always continued to keep the women under their heels up to the end of the 18th century. It was towards the beginning of the 19th century that factors like increasing enlightenment, abolition movements, growth of agriculture and industrial revolution opened the highway for women to compete and participate with men in various fields of life. With further increasing awareness, they also formed certain unions in the Western Nations. Working women up to the middle of 1800s had no legal rights to the money they earned. It belonged to her father or the husband. Even in England, women did not have proprietary rights on their estates before 1930 AD. Factually, the rights women have today in the West were not bestowed on them on humanitarian grounds but they had to win their rights through continuous struggle and sacrifices for a long time. As compared to this, women in Islam neither had to beg for their rights nor to agitate for the same. Almighty Allah had himself prescribed the rights of women since the first half of the 7th century AD. It was mandatory for the believers to abide by the commandments of the Lord for all times to come.

Islam had been the first revealed religion which acknowledged independent personalities with Divinely Ordained rights for protection, sustenance, respect and social status of women during all phases of life. It was the All-seeing, All-knowing, Creator of the universe who in His utmost wisdom revealed the rights of women to the believers through His last and the final messenger towards humankind. Since the divine ordination is based on the perfect knowledge of the Creator, it needs no amendment till the Day of Resurrection. As against this, human enactments or codifications always suffered from inequities on one side or the other. They, therefore, continued to amend their man-made laws which had not been free from inherent defects. As compared to the same, the unbiased

people will find the golden mean in the Divine Law. Any change in the same is likely to disturb the balance of justice between the genders. As such, those who criticize the Islamic law about women are either unaware of its true import or fail to appreciate it due to their bias against Islam.

After suffering from backwardness, ignorance and poverty for thousands of years, the Western nations started coming out of the dark ages w.e.f the mid of the 12th Century AD. It was during the crusades that European nations came across a civilization which was far better than theirs. Soon, thereafter, they became enlightened by the sources of knowledge and power due to which they started strenuous struggle to explore the world and conquer the lands known for their wealth and resources. It was during this search that they luckily struck at the golden decade (1490-1500 AD) for the Western world. Firstly Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain succeeded to push out the Muslims from their last strong hold in Spain by conquering Granada in 1492 AD. During the same period Columbus reached the Caribbean Islands which was the first step towards the discovery of the New World. Bartolomeu Dias of Portugal sighted the Cape of Good Hope in 1488 while it was rounded for the first time by another Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama during 1497-1499. Thus after reaching India, they continued to go further towards Malaysia, China, Japan, Indonesia, Australia, New Zealand and numerous other Islands in the Pacific Ocean.

The new discoveries and conquests of the richest lands like India inspired the western nations to learn the history, the culture and the languages of the lands colonized by them. This was necessary for them to have increased awareness about the indigenous population occupying those lands. The western nations, therefore, employed various priests, historians and scholars to study the vernacular languages and to translate the classical works of the East into the languages of the conquerors or settlers in the colonies. During these efforts the Christian missionaries and other scholars found a good chance to paint a perverted picture of the history of each nation in order to prove inferiority of the culture of the vanquished people. Hence, 1750 to 1950 was the period during which they made the best attempts to show their own superiority over these nations by

ridiculing the religion, the culture and the languages spoken by the people in the lands colonized by them.

Muslims being the foremost rivals and enemies of the Western Christendom were the main target of degradation by the West. The missionaries and the historians of the West, therefore, continued to make hectic efforts to prove the superiority of Western nations in each and every field of life. They made an effective propaganda to prove that the conquerors were the pioneers of human rights and especially the rights of women to bring them at par with the males. They continue to do so even today knowing full well that there had been no concept of human freedom and rights among the European nations before the Magna Carta signed in 1215. Even this charter had only one clause that could be interpreted as a protection for the free men who comprised of a small percentage of the population of medieval England. The overwhelming majority of the people consisted of peasants known as 'villeins'¹ who could seek justice only through the courts of their lords. The decisions of these courts were, therefore, subject to the whims and fancies of the lords. (For further details please refer to Ch. 15 of our book *Slavery and Human Rights through the Ages*, s.v. 'Magna Carta').

Similar had been the case about the rights of women. The Western Scholars continued to propagate that women especially among the Muslims had been suffering from seclusion, oppression and helplessness. While making such remarks, they set aside the history of the Western Nations regarding the miserable conditions of ordinary women in their lands. In contrast to the same, Islam had granted equity of rights to all women among them about 1400 years ago. Believers in Islam had, therefore, been taking care about the rights of women under the fear of the Lord. As against them, the non-believers have usually been pretending to be more generous towards women yet they never succeeded to provide them comfort or a respectable status in the society. It is, therefore, necessary that the non-believers may have an in-depth and unbiased study of

¹ (In medieval England) a feudal tenant, entirely subject to a lord or manor to whom he paid dues and services in return for land (*Concise Oxford English Dictionary*).

the rights, the Lord God had bestowed upon the women. We hope the seekers of truth will find that Islam excels all other religions or societies in providing the best atmosphere to the women so that they may enjoy peace and prosperity at home without any exploitation by the outside world. We have, therefore, brought on record the material that may help the readers to draw a comparison between the rights of women granted by Islam and those they could acquire after centuries of their struggles or agitations in the West.

By restoring the inheritance rights of women and status of the widows and divorcees, by creating equality of rights between husbands and wives, by assuring better and kind treatment to mothers, sisters, daughters and wives and by introducing numerous marital reforms, **the Holy Prophet ﷺ rightfully deserved to be acknowledged as the emancipator of women throughout the world.** Similarly, the cancellation of the relations such as fathers, mothers, sisters or brothers etc. created by the words of mouth was among the great reforms made by him. By drawing a difference between the treatments of nations with women, therefore, we have tried to exhibit the beneficence of Islam for women which no other religion or civilization had provided them.

Since the primary purpose of this book had been to highlight Islamic reforms to improve the destiny of women summarily, we have avoided detailed discussions on various matters especially those pertaining to Nikaah and Talaaq etc. For such details, therefore, the readers may consult different books on jurisprudence of Islam.

For convenience of the readers we have divided the book into two volumes. Volume I covers the historical background describing plight of women, their condemnation in various societies and religions of the world, the Story of Fall, hapless conditions of women before Islam and Islamic reforms to improve destiny of the women. The second volume discusses polygamy, multi-marriages of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the considerations for his marriages with appropriate reply to the derogatory observations made by the antagonists of Islam. Certain allegations of the missionaries and the orientalist such as sensuality of the Prophet ﷺ, slander of pedophilia and his lust for power

and wealth etc. have also been replied in the 2nd Volume of the Book.

PLIGHT OF WOMEN IN THE WORLD

It's an admitted fact that the female gender had been victim of oppression, exploitation and maltreatment throughout the recorded history of the nations. The pagan religions had their own principles and rites leading to a subhuman treatment to women in almost all the communities of different continents. Even the followers of the revealed religions like Judaism and Christianity treated them in such despicable manners that they always lived a miserable life than enjoying any parity or respect in the eyes of the males. Islam is perhaps the only religion which accepts full humanity of women and accords respect, love, care and courtesy to women in their different roles in life. Women get great respect as mothers and grandmothers. The Holy Prophet ﷺ and the Qur'an has enjoined on the Muslims to treat their wives and families in a nice manner. The believers are obliged to look after their sisters and daughters by giving them proper education, training to maintain tranquility in the houses and marrying them to the best possible spouses they can afford. This book, therefore, goes into some detail to describe Muslim treatment with women in all phases of their lives.

No religion except Islam stressed the equality of social status and rights of women against men. Even the most acclaimed legal code of Hammurabi (r. 1792-1750 BC) was discriminatory between the rights of a husband and wife. It has been stated that:

Many of the laws applying to men and women also reflected a double standard. If a husband committed adultery, his spouse was permitted to leave him. **An unfaithful wife, however, would be drowned.** Although the code discriminated against women in some ways, it also gave them certain rights. Unlike women in other ancient societies, Babylonian women could divorce, own slaves, transact business, and bequeath property.²

Prior to Islam Women had been subjected to despise, coercion and disgrace throughout the world. According to

² Larry S. Krieger & others, *World History, Perspectives on the Past*, p. 38.

Lecky, "it was a favorite doctrine of the Christian fathers that concupiscence or sensual passion was the original sin of human nature".³ They trace its origin to the first woman i.e. Eve. Pandora, though a mythological figure, was perhaps the second one to be condemned as author of all human ills. Many Christians, therefore, conclude that by **their normal disposition, women seem naturally incapable of virtue.**

Islam refutes all such blemishes against the female sex. We shall, therefore, be discussing the reforms introduced by Islam to describe the true social status of women and to equate them with the males almost in each and every aspect of life. The same shall be detailed in the different chapters of the book.

Plight of women from the ancient to the modern times is evident from the following:

Women Denied Citizenship

In Greek city states around 750 BC only free adult men were counted as citizens. Women, children, slaves and foreigners were not citizens but could be counted among the population.⁴

Law of Moses Excludes Women from Inheritance

Husband the Owner of Family Estate:

"In matrimony, the old patriarchal pattern subordinated the woman to her husband both legally and socially, the husband was the owner of the family estate. Everything the women brought into the marriage, everything she received later as a gift, or earned or inherited, become the property of her husband. Only if his death left her in penury did she receive one fourth of his estate, but in no case more than one hundred gold pounds no matter how large a fortune the husband left."⁵

³ Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, p. 208.

⁴ *World History, Perspectives on the Past*, p. 108.

⁵ *Woman's Plight*, p. 87-88, quoted from *Women in the Modern World* by Patai, Raphael, (New York, Free Press, USA, 1967), p. 193.

Wife does not inherit from her husband nor daughters from their father except when there is no male heir. (Nb. 27:8) According to Fr Roland de Vaux:

The Decalogue includes a man's wife among his possessions, along with his house and land, his male and female slaves, his ox and his ass (Ex 20:17; Dt 5:21). Her husband can repudiate her, but she cannot claim a divorce; all her life she remains a minor. The wife does not inherit from her husband, nor daughters from their father, except when there is no male heir. (Nb. 27:8). A vow made by a girl or married woman needs, to be valid, the consent of father or husband and if this consent is withheld, the vow is null and void (Nb 30:4-17).⁶

We also find in the OT that:

The property of every Israelite will remain attached to his tribe. Every woman who inherits property in an Israelite tribe must marry a man belonging to that tribe. In this way all Israelites will inherit the property of their ancestors,⁷

As against this, we observe that Islam has specified the inheritance of women to cover all circumstances faced by them. The women can possess and alienate the properties in their own right. Islam imposes no limit on the property a woman can inherit or possess. For further details please refer to our chapter titled '*Women in Islam*' s.v. '*Inheritance*'.

The Old Testament did not provide any clear-cut guidance to determine specific shares of the individual inheritors in the material possessions left over by their ancestors. Even long after Moses, the matters pertaining to inheritance continued to be regulated partly by well known traditions of the patriarchs (which had neither been constant nor in accordance with the Law of Moses) or by tribal customs of the desert during the nomadic stage of the Israelites and thereafter. It has, therefore, been observed that:

Individual ownership of land is unknown in this state of society, and personal property is small in amount. The man owns his arms, the woman her ornaments. The cattle, while nominally the property of the sheikh, are really common to the whole clan. The spoils of war are divided among the able-

⁶ Mary Daly, *The Church and The Second Sex*, (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1975), p. 75-76.

⁷ Num 36:7-8 GNB.

bodied men. At a man's death his arms are seized by the next-of-kin, or are divided, like the spoils of war, among the men able to bear arms. **Women do not inherit because they are themselves the property of their husbands and pass to the heirs with the rest of the estate. This was the rule in Israel even after the settlement in Canaan.**⁸

In default of the patriarchal system makes the brothers inherit, and after them uncles, that is, father's brothers. Next come cousins in the various degrees, always on the father's side; for, the women being excluded, their descendants have no rights. The Hebrews, however, always felt it to be a misfortune that a man should have no son to succeed him.⁹

This was also the theory of the book of Ruth:

Ruth offers herself as wife to Boaz in the belief that he is next-of-kin to her deceased husband. Boaz informs her that there is a nearer kinsman, and he takes her only after this other has refused. Here the connexion with the right of inheritance is made clear by the statement that **the kinsman has the right of redemption of such real estate as belonged to the deceased, the wife going with it.**¹⁰

It has further been stated that:

While we suppose that private property in land was fully recognized in this period, it is probable that the right of inheritance was limited to male kinsmen. There is no clear case of women owning land before the Exile, though they had personal property (...) Laban's daughters, just referred to, say quite frankly that there is nothing for them in the house of their father, and that he has sold them and eaten up the price. The language shows conclusively that at the time when the account was written **daughters had no claim as heiresses**, and that the most they could hope for from a generous father was some part of the price that he had received for them. The persistency with which the Hebrew writers represent the widow as an object of charity indicates that widows were without claim on the estates of their husbands.¹¹

The position has been further clarified in the following:

There could have been no question in these days of a widow inheriting from her husband, since she was regarded as a part of the property which went over the heirs as is shown by the

⁸ *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, James Hastings, Vol. VII, (Edinburgh: T.& Th. Clark, 1974), p. 306.

⁹ *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. VII, p. 307.

¹⁰ *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. VII, p. 307.

¹¹ *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. VII, p. 306.

stories of Ruth, Absalom (IISam xvi 21-22), Adonija and Abishag (Iki ii 22, see Levirate Marriage), nor could there had been question about daughters inheriting from their father, since daughters were given in marriage either by their father or by their brothers or other relatives after the father's death, thus becoming the property of the family into which they married. (see Daughters in Jewish Law). An exceptional case is mentioned; Job gave his daughter a share in his estate equal to that of his brothers. (Job xlii-15).¹²

Although the Bible contains different instances of inheritance before Moses yet there was no question of widow inheriting from her husband because, they were regarded as part of the property. Similarly, we find no instance of daughters inheriting from their father. The right of daughters had been ordained subsequently with specific reference to the daughters of Ze-loph-e-had simply because of the non-existence of males to inherit him.

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, The daughters of Zelophehad speak right: thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren; and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them. And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, **If a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter.**¹³

It is worth noting here that the said right of inheritance was neither absolute nor free from restraints. The daughters, in this specific case, were tied to the land and possessions which were tied to the tribe of their fathers. **Marriage to next of kin was the first preference while marriage within the tribe was a must. Marriage out of the clan would deprive the daughter of her inheritance.**

This is the thing which the LORD doth command concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, Let them marry to whom they think best; **only to the family of the tribe of their father shall they marry.** So shall not the inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe: for every one of the children of Israel shall keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. And every daughter, that possesseth an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel, shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her

¹² *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, Isidore Singer and others, Vol. VI, (N.Y.: KTAV Publishing House Inc.), p. 583.

¹³ Num 27:6-8 KJV.

father, that the children of Israel may enjoy every man the inheritance of his fathers. Neither shall the inheritance remove from one tribe to another tribe; but every one of the tribes of the children of Israel shall keep himself to his own inheritance.¹⁴

Consequently, all the five daughters of Zelophehad had to marry unto their father's brother's sons i.e. in the tribe of their father. There were no such restrictions on the sons who could inherit both from their father and mother. The Rabbinic Laws, therefore, have it that:

A man is his mother's heir, the husband is the wife's heir but the wife is not her husband's heir. She has, however, her dower.¹⁵

Daughters in Israel had no claim as heiresses as long as the deceased had some male heir. The case of Zelophehad, therefore, seems to be an exception than a permanent Law of Moses. The history of the Israelites contains no other instance of inheritance of women from fathers, mothers, husbands, sons or daughters.

Widows. Traces of evidence are not wanting that with the older Hebrews, as with the Arabs before Mohammad, a man's widow could be inherited exactly like his other property. The grasping Reuben—so ran the legend—sought to seize the inheritance even in his father's lifetime (Gen. 35:22); the rebellious **Absalom comes forward publicly as heir and successor to his father by taking possession of his harem** (2S. 16:20ff) – an act which does not in itself at all shock the moral sense of the people. (...), As already said, in spite of Deuteronomic prohibition, **such marriages of son with stepmother were not unusual down to Ezekiel's time** (Ezk. 22:10).¹⁶

"Medieval law-givers, as we have seen had, **debarred Hindu woman from owning property in her own right**. She was completely excluded from inheritance except, of course, in the case of matriarchal and other communities which permitted women to inherit as a matter of custom; generally speaking a woman of any of three higher castes could only own her Stridhan or what was settled on her marriage, by way of **moveable property** (ornaments etc,) **and even this she**

¹⁴ Num 36:6-9 KJV.

¹⁵ *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. VII, p. 309.

¹⁶ *Encyclopedia Biblica*, ed. by Rev. T.K. Cheyenne, and other, Vol. III, (London: Watts and Co. 1903), 'Marriage' p. 2948.

could not alienate in her own right...¹⁷

Eileen Power reports about the Medieval Women that:

In feudal law a woman could be endowed by land, and we know of endowable women holding land by every title recognized by law, including the most exalted ones. But in practice, feudal marriage carried with it a certain denigration of woman as a person. **While the Church subordinated woman to her husband, feudalism subordinated her to her fief.** All feudal marriages of convenience were dictated by interests of land. In some ways an heiress – indeed an heir too – was as much a chattel tied to the soil as was the manorial villein.¹⁸

Wretchedness and Depravity of Women

Different religions and societies have been using derogatory terms for women. No society or religion except Islam had ever taken the women at par with the men nor did they find any virtue in them. To elucidate the point, we quote certain examples from different faiths.

Woman, One of Major Evils

In the Satapatha Brahmana we are told that a wife should take her meals after her husband has finished his, and a wife who does not answer back to her husband even under grave provocation is praiseworthy, elsewhere a disobedient wife is enjoined to be taught obedience by physical force. "The Maitrayani Samhita places woman on a par with dice and drink, and **describes her one of the major evils of society.** She is declared to be untruth itself in human society and is connected with **Nirriti, the genius of darkness.** The Taitareya Samhita and Satapatha Brahmana rank her as inferior to a bad man."¹⁹

The Position of Hindu Women had reached its lowest depth during 1800s. Women were considered of no significance

¹⁷ *Woman's Plight*, p. 86, quoted from Thomas, P., *Indian Women Through the Ages*: (Bombay: Asia Publishing House 1964), p. 368.

¹⁸ Eileen Power, *Medieval Women*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 7th Printing:1996), p. 19.

(Villein: A person who is bound to the land and owned by the feudal lord.)

¹⁹ *Woman's Plight*, p. 68. quoted from *Indian women Through the Ages*, p. 58-59.

legally, ideologically, socially and morally. Polygamy, child marriage, illiteracy, sati, permanent widowhood and complete subordination of women through the denial of legal rights were prevalent throughout the Hindu society. They were treated as slaves possessing no personality or independence.

Lecky²⁰ observes that the combined influence of the Jewish writings and of the ascetic teachings treated women as the **chief source of temptation** to man which was shown in fierce invectives against that sex. Although the catholic emperors from Constantine to Justinian had been trying to repeal laws in favor of women, yet it has been observed that:

But in the whole feudal legislation women were placed in a much lower legal position than in the Pagan Empire. In addition to the personal restrictions which grew necessarily out of the Catholic doctrines concerning divorce, and the subordination of the weaker sex, we find numerous and stringent enactments, which rendered it impossible for women to succeed to any considerable amount of property, and which almost reduced them to the alternative of marriage or a nunnery. The complete inferiority of the sex was continually maintained by the law, and that generous public opinion which in Rome had frequently revolted against the injustice done to girls, in depriving them of the greater part of the inheritance of their fathers, totally disappeared. Wherever the canon law has been the basis of legislation, we find laws of succession sacrificing the interests of daughters and of wives, and a state of public opinion which has been formed and regulated by these laws; nor was any serious attempt made to abolish them till the close of the last century.²¹

It has further been stated that:

Tacitus, in a very famous work, had long before portrayed in the most flattering colours the purity of the Germans. Adultery, he said, was very rare among them. **The adulteress was driven from the house with shaven hair, and beaten ignominiously through the village.** Neither youth, nor beauty, nor wealth could enable a woman who was known to have sinned to secure a husband. Polygamy was restricted to the princes, who looked upon a plurality of wives rather as a badge of dignity than as a gratification of the

²⁰ William Edward Hartpole Lecky, (1838–1903) was an Irish historian and political theorist.

²¹ Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, pp. 358-359.

passions. Mothers invariably gave suck to their own children. Infanticide was forbidden. **Widows were not allowed to remarry.**²²

Women Bound to Worship Their Husbands

“And most law-givers both earlier and later, were of the opinion, that a woman was bound to worship her husband as a god, even if he were a drunkard, gambler or debauchee”²³

Woman Generally Regarded as Inferior to Man

Many saints, sages and philosophers in the world had been decrying women folk as a whole labeling different stigmas on them. **Aristotle** for example believed that some people are naturally more servile than others.²⁴ **As regards women, their function is the use of their bodies and they are slaves by nature:**

Tame animals are by nature better than wild [...] as between male and female the former is by nature superior and ruler, the latter inferior and subject. [...] Wherever there is the same wide discrepancy between two sets of human beings as there is between mind and body or between man and beast, then the inferior of the two sets, those whose condition is such that their function is the use of their bodies and nothing better can be expected of them [...] are slaves by nature. It is better for them, just as in the analogous cases mentioned, to be thus ruled and subject [...] The use, too, of slaves hardly differs from that of domestic animals; from both we derive that

²² Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, pp. 360. Islam attaches no defilement or depravity to a woman due to the death of her husband. It accords equal treatment to male as well as female in this respect. Just as the widowed husband has full rights to remarry the woman of his choice, the widow too can marry any man of her choice provided he agrees to marry her. Further details can found in our Chapter s.v. “*Divorce and Widowhood*”.

²³ Thomas, P., *Indian Women Through the Ages*: p. 222, cited by *Woman's Plight*, p. 69.

²⁴ Please see “BBC (archives), Ethics Guide, *Philosophers Justifying Slavery*, 2014”.

which is essential for our bodily needs.²⁵

We also find similar concepts repeated in different words:

As a general rule, woman was regarded as a lower kind of creature, made periodically impure by her menses and by childbirth in which state man must not touch her. She was considered **mentally inferior to man, suspected of having no soul, and excluded from religious teachings and most religious rituals.**²⁶

In this respect, we need to point out that the writer of the passage quoted above seems to have forgotten the fact that the Creator was fully aware of the nature of each and every creation in the universe. According to the Qur'an both men and women are created from a single entity they are one from the other and the complimentary factors to make a whole (Al-Qur'an 4:1, 30:21). If women were soul-less, how can they procreate the males with souls? As such, men can claim no superiority over their mothers, sisters, wives and daughters merely by degrading them to animality or slavery.

Woman as the Worst Enemy for Man

According to certain writers, woman was taken as worse enemy for man e.g.:

In the Tandulaveyaliya we are given etymologies of various synonyms of "woman"

'She is called **Nari** (Na-ari) because there was no worse enemy for man than she; she is **mahila** because she charms her wiles and graces; she is called **Padma** because she accelerates a man's passion; she is called **Mahitiya** because she creates dissension; she is **Rama** because she delights in coquetry; she is called **Angana** because she loves the Anga or body of men. She is **Josiya** by her tricks she keeps men under subjections; she is **Vanita** because she caters to the taste of man with her various blandishments"²⁷

²⁵ Judith Still, *Derrida and Other Animals*, p. 263 (Jacques Derrida 1930-2004 was an Algerian born French philosopher who authored more than 40 books.

²⁶ *Woman's Plight*, p. 74. quoted from Stern, Karal, *The Flight from Woman*, (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, , 1966), p. 11.

²⁷ *Woman's Plight*, p. 67-68, quoted from Thomas, P., *Indian Women Through the Ages*: (Bombay: Asia Publishing House 1964), p. 110-111.

Here is another way to disseminate the hatred towards women:

“the intelligent may know the sands of the earth, the waters of the sea, and the size of the Himalayas; but a woman’s heart they may not know. They weep and make you weep, they tell lies and make you believe them (...) a woman, indeed, is like sugar when she has fallen in love, but the very same woman surpasses the bitter Nimba as soon as her love has ended (...) Delighting in various love sports, unstable in their affections, they are like the colour of turmeric. Cruel in their hearts, and charming in body, speech and glance, girls resemble a knife inlaid with gold”²⁸

Contaminating Influence of Women

The position was not much different in Hinduism and Shintoism. Choudhary Rehmat Ali, therefore, quotes that:

We enquired further into this concept of the contaminating influence of the female. It is found in Buddhism, in Hinduism, in Shintoism. It appears in innumerable forms. **Men’s and women’s clothes, for instance, must not be washed in the same water**, carried in the same basket, hung up to dry on the same line. Even when there are separate lines, they must be at different altitudes, so that no portion of any man’s garments is lower than any portion of a woman’s garment.²⁹

Hindu husbands hated their wives to such an extent that they avoided addressing them by their names. **The husband called his wife as ‘my servant’ or ‘my dog’.** The Japanese husband was enjoined never to speak appreciatively of his wife. He was advised to refer to her as ‘my old hag’.³⁰

It has been further recorded that:

There is a widespread tradition **throughout the East that a man should not eat in his wife’s company**. Manu says expressly that it is forbidden to do so. The husband eats first, and helps himself to all the tasty morsels. When he is finished and has departed, his wife may pick up what she can out of what remains. If a Japanese husband is entertaining guests,

²⁸ *Woman’s Plight*, p. 68-69, quoted from Thomas, P., *Indian Women Through the Ages*: p. 112.

²⁹ *Woman’s Plight*, p. 59. quoted from David and Vira Mace, *Marriage East and West*, (Macgibbon and Knee, London, 1960).

³⁰ *Woman’s Plight*, (Lahore: Islamic Publications Ltd. 1987), p. 57.

he should regard his wife as on a level with the servants, and treat her accordingly.³¹

Western Philosophers, Poets and Writers on Women

Homer for example believed that there was

'no fouler friend than a woman when her mind is bent to evil'.³²

Aristophanes³³ **thought there was nothing worse in the world than a woman** unless some other woman. To Aristotle she was "an inferior man", to Virgil "fickle and changeful", to Milton a "fair defect", to Pope "the best reserved of God", but nevertheless invariably "at heart a rake", to the scientific Francis Galetton "capricious and coy" and far less straightforward than a man, to Whitman the very Gate of the human soul, to Nietzsche the "**second mistake of God**", etc. "**Woman, at best, is bad,**" said Thomas Dekker, seventeenth century English playwright, George Wilkins, a contemporary, said that they were "in churches, saints; abroad. Angels' at home, devils'. Nathaniel Field, who wrote about at the same time believed them to be "torturous as Hell, insatiate as a grave," and John Webster, another playwright of the day, summarized it all: "woman to man is either a god or a wolf." Shakespeare, who probably saw more deeply into women (and men, too) than anyone else either before or since, finally throws up his hands with a despairing, "who is it can read a woman?"³⁴

Women were even denied the "right" to have souls, Mary bitterly wrote, basing this flimsy contention on the line of Milton's, "He for God, she for God in him".

"Woman is the toy of man".

"She was, truly, God's angry woman".

"She was a person of extremes in all things"³⁵

Eileen Power reports that there had been many didactic poems, detailing the vices of women. She writes that:

³¹ *Woman's Plight*, p. 57.

³² *Woman's Plight*, p. 70.

³³ Aristo Phanes (c. 446 – c. 386 BC) was a comic playwright of ancient Anthens.

³⁴ *Woman's Plight*, p. 70-71. quoted from Lundberg, Ferdinand and Marynia FF, *Modern Women, The Lost Sex*, (Harper and Brothers Publishers, New York & London 1947).

³⁵ *Woman's Plight*, p. 71-72. quoted from Lundberg, Ferdinand and Marynia FF, *Modern Women, The Lost Sex*.

Another device consists in calling up a long list of all the women in the Bible or in antiquity from Eve downwards who led men astray; such was the book of 'wicked wives' which the Wife of Bath's fifth husband insisted on reading to her every evening.³⁶

Sexual Exploitation of Women

Church and the Women

Women had been subjected to torture, degradation and exploitation throughout the world. Even the church had played a great part towards mal-treatment, coercion and sexual abuse of women attached to church institutions or others visiting the church for ritual confession or guidance from the priests. In this respect, Mary Daly observes that the church perpetuates a double standard of morality. She also Quotes de Beauvoir that 'When woman becomes man's property, he wants her to be virgin and he requires complete fidelity under threats of extreme penalties'. The double standard is evident from the following:

Christianity poured out its scorn upon them [prostitutes] but accepted them as a necessary evil. **Both St. Augustine and St Thomas asserted that the suppression of prostitution would mean the disruption of society by debauch.**³⁷

The readers must take notice of the fact the Christian fathers were prohibiting polygamy allowed by the Almighty but recommending prostitution as a necessary evil to replace the law of the Lord. The double standard had, therefore, been highlighted in the following. According to de Beauvoir:

Prostitution illustrates the hypocrisy of the double standard. It is the male's demand that creates the supply, yet he suffers no disgrace as a result. Man is measured by other standards whether he frequents brothels or not. Woman, having been reduced to the condition of a venereal being, 'stakes her moral value in the contingent realm of sexuality'³⁸

³⁶ Eileen Power, *Medieval Women*, p. 30.

³⁷ Mary Daly, p. 63.

³⁸ Mary Daly, p. 64.

Prostitution

The Concise Oxford Dictionary (11th ed.) defines 'prostitute' as a person, typically a woman, who engages in sexual activity for payment. In this sense prostitution had existed since about 2400 BC. For the sake of brevity, we shall avoid history of prostitution including the temple prostitution in various regions of the world. The institution, however, highlights the helplessness and depravity of the female sex since time immemorial. Besides many instances of temple Prostitution in India, there had been sexual exploitation of women due to the existence of Jati system prevailing since thousands of years. The social stratification had been such that the women belonging to Shudra or the Dalits had mostly been the victims of sexual exploitation by the members of superior classes. Many of the affected women, thereafter were forced to serve as regular prostitutes during the remaining parts of their lives.

Although Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) of India had coined the term 'Harijan' i.e. the children of God for Dalits, the ostracized or the untouchables but the term was considered derogatory by the Dalits themselves. According to a rough estimate **about ¼ of the total population of India consisted of Dalits** who are untouchables and prohibited to enter any temple or to study any scripture of the Hindus. A part of Dalits are even unseeable by the members of the upper class Jatis. Women belonging to Dalits are, therefore, the most wretched female persons in the world. Some excerpts from *Deprived Devis* explain the same:

In India the Dalit Woman is humiliated and insulted everyday-every-minute-as a poor woman-as a Dalit woman and as a woman. Oppressed, discriminated and tyrannized – she is reduced to sub-human level..... Many people are becoming apathetic about discrimination along caste lines-especially against the 25 percent of Dalits of India. To be a Dalit means living in a sub-human, degraded and insecure way. **Every hour two Dalits are assaulted, every day three Dalit women are raped and two-Dalits are killed.** The period between 1990 and 1999 witnessed 35 instances of Dalit massacres in which the total number of victims were 400 and 350 being Dalits.....Dalits are not only socio-cultural group but often represent an economic class as well. **Dalit women make up a large number of professional sex workers.** 90 per cent of those who die of starvation and attendant diseases are Dalits. Untouchability and poverty feed each other-

untouchable status accentuates economic exploitation and poverty strengthens low polluting social status.³⁹

Example: Dalits living in Munni Khera, village in U.P., live in an area separated from the rest of the village. 35 per cent are backward caste. 12 per cent are Muslims and the rest are Dalits. Ramchandra, a dalit from the village was married to Ramvathi and they owned a piece of land on which they had a house, Upper caste villagers were trying to take the land from them and Ramchandra and Ramvathi had objected to this. In September 1998 Ramvathi was gang raped by five men. Rape her was a tool of tyranny-as a means of isolating her from the rest of their community as the stigma of rape can never be wiped out. The police did not lodge an FIR or help them when they returned to the village on 30th January 1999 to reclaim their property. **Then seventeen men beat Ramchandra and Ramvathi with sticks and she was raped again and killed.** Till date Ramchandra has not received any compensation. No justice because justice itself is blinded by caste consideration.⁴⁰

It seems there is only one democratic institution that is the institution of sex. **She is untouchable as a dalit. As a sexual object she is highly touchable!!**

No one practices untouchability when it comes to sex.

Rape is a common phenomenon in rural areas, as a part of caste custom or village tradition. **The dalit girls are forced to have sex with the village landlords.** Attacks on dalit women during massacres, police raids and caste clashes are common. Dalit women are easy targets for any perpetrator because the upper caste considers them to be sexually available and because they are largely unprotected by the state machinery.⁴¹

It was our great frustration to find that **in rural areas women are forced into prostitution (Devdasi system), in the name of religion.** The "servants of God" as they are called can be recognized by the jewellery (in most of the places) they wear red beaded necklaces with silver and gold medallion. The necklace symbolizes the bondage that defines dalit devdasi girls whose parents have given them to local Goddesses or temples as human offerings. **These dalit girls become sexual servants to the upper caste men in the village and priests of the temple.** They become public

³⁹ V. Mohini Giri 'Deprived Devis' (New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 2006), p. 21.

⁴⁰ V. Mohini Giri, p. 24.

⁴¹ V. Mohini Giri, p. 25.

chattel, who can be used by men free of charge. Only in this aspect do untouchables suddenly become touchable. The upper caste men would not drink from the same glass as the devdasi, but they make use of her body.

During our visit to Hubli Yellama told us that she was nine years old when her parents sold her for Rs. 200/- to an upper caste man. He gave her a saree and a blouse and paid for the alcohol at the initiation celebration. After that, she became his unpaid concubine, begging for money and breaking stones for construction sites to support herself.⁴²

The Hindu religious philosophy though based on human equality is practiced in a series of inequalities. This social sanction deeply entrenched in the psyche of the upper caste Hindus, leads them to see themselves as a superior race destined to rule and the Dalits as inferior race born only to serve, hence this clearly depicts that "Casteism is Racism". The basic survival of the Dalits is at stake because of the Hindu's complete lack of respect for the dalit's human dignity and equality. Indeed, the violation of the Dalits fundamental human rights is a daily occurrence – social cultural, economic and political.⁴³

Child Prostitution:

Mr. Rehmat Ali Choudhary has recorded that:

"The combination of increased members of young women in urban areas and the fact that the age for consent for girls in a country like England was still twelve in the 1870's was a recipe for disaster. The use of children twelve years and younger for prostitution was very widespread. They were there, and they were unemployed. This mean, as Rowbotham (...) points out, that there were many young unmarried mothers who had to choose between the prison-like workhouse or the dreary streetwalker's routine, to feed their children,⁴⁴

Another very vulnerable group in the nineteenth century city was the servants. The habit from slavery days of men considering women household workers as being at their disposal for sexual service continued after slavery. If a servant girl became pregnant there was no recourse when the mistress of the household turned her out. Many prostitutes were forced into the profession via that route, other

⁴² V. Mohini Giri, p. 26.

⁴³ V. Mohini Giri, p. 27.

⁴⁴ *Woman's Plight*, p. 66. quoted from Boulding, Elice, *The Underside of History: A View of Women Through Time*. West Viewpress Boulder: Colorado, USA, p.631)

employment being barred....⁴⁵

Temple Prostitution

In regions where Greek religion flourished there were numerous temples dedicated to Venus the Courtesan, and in keeping with the reputation of the goddess of the free love these shrines were the haunts of courtesans and their clients, in the temple of Corinth, we are told hundreds of prostitutes lived in the precincts of the temple, and the main income of the shrine was from these gay women. **In ancient Babylon, it was obligatory for every woman to the great city to live, at least once in her life, in the precincts of the temple of Mylitta, the goddess of fertility, and hire herself out to strangers and offer the fees thus collected to the goddess;** the young and pretty we are told, got clients immediately they occupied the quarters, while the elderly and ugly had to wait for days before they could discharge their debt to the goddess.⁴⁶

Urban Prostitutes

In many cases, young women who leave their villages and small towns and go to the big city to find a better livelihood get entangled in such illegitimate relationships. What usually happens is that after a short while, the man who succeeded in seducing such a girl leaves her and then she easily falls victim to another who similarly takes advantage of her. The incidence of pregnancies resulting from such relationships is very high.

"This is the story of almost all the unwed mothers in the protection. Their fate, and that which awaits their children can easily be imagined. With rare exceptions they do not wish to return home where they could count on the support of their mothers. In the overwhelming majority of cases, they sign away their babies before they are born, through one of the many intermediaries who do a prosperous business selling the babies to childless couples; occasionally, the mother simply abandon the babies; in even more unfortunate cases they do away with them. In any event, the unwed mother, now freed of her child, becomes emotionally crippled; as a rule, the next

⁴⁵ *Woman's Plight*, p. 66. quoted from Boulding, Elice, p.632)

⁴⁶ *Woman's Plight*, p. 261, quoted from Thomas, P. *Indian Women Through the Ages*: (Bombay: Asia publishing House, 964), p. 236.

step that inevitably follows is prostitution.⁴⁷

Soft Corners for Prostitution

Referring to page 294-295 of the book *The Underside of History: A View of Women Through Time*. Boulding, Elice, (West Viewpress Boulder: Colorado, USA, 1976), Rehmat Ali Choudhary has quoted that:

"If we are to summarize what we consider the scientific, rational and human attitude we would say: Prostitution is not an immoral, criminal or anti-social occupation. **It should, therefore, be made perfectly legal and should be considered as legitimate.** As the occupation carries with it certain dangers to public health, it should be subject to sanitary control to treat her decently and humanely is not the decent and the human thing, but it is socially necessary, because the better the prostitute is treated and the more self respect she gains, the more pro-socially she will act, the less of a menace and a anger will she be. This will go on progressively until all her dangerous features have disappeared and she will have caused to be a menace at all and the phrase "the social evil, as synonym of prostitution, will then disappear from our vocabulary."⁴⁸

What is the cause of prostitution? Why do women engage in it? Why do men patronize it? These three questions could be answered with one three-letter monosyllable: Sex. And the answer would not be a facetious evasion. It will be true and all inclusive. Exterminate sex and prostitution will be completely blotted out and there will be no prostitution problem.⁴⁹

St. Gregory the Great following in steps of some pagan philosophers had taken stringent measures to abolish the practice of the religious institutions of Greece and Asia Minor which had consecrated prostitution. With this, the courtesans sank into a lower state of degradation. Besides these changes, the duty of the reciprocal fidelity in marriage was enforced in new earnestness.

The contrast between the levity with which the frailty of men has in most ages been regarded, and the extreme severity with which women who have been guilty of the same offence have generally been treated, forms one of the most singular anomalies in moral history, and appears the more remarkable

⁴⁷ *Woman's Plight*, p. 264-65, quoted from Raphael Patai, *Women in the Modern World* (New York: Free Press, USA, 1967), p. 199-200.

⁴⁸ *Woman's Plight*, p. 265-266.

⁴⁹ *Woman's Plight*, p. 265.

when we remember that the temptation usually springs from the sex which is so readily pardoned, that the sex which is visited with such crushing penalties is proverbially the most weak, and that, in the case of women, but not in the case of men, the vice is very commonly the result of the most abject misery and poverty. For this disparity of censure several reasons have been assigned. The offence can be more surely and easily detected, and therefore more certainly punished, in the case of women than of men; and as the duty of providing for his children falls upon the father, the introduction into the family of children who are not his own is a special injury to him, while illegitimate children who do not spring from adultery will probably, on account 'of their father having entered into no compact to support them, ultimately become criminals or paupers, and therefore a burden to society.⁵⁰

Mr. Lecky, therefore, deplores playful attitude of the seducers as well as evaluation of seduction in the literature. He says:

The character of the seducer, and especially of the passionless seducer who pursues his career simply as a kind of sport, and under the influence of no stronger motive than vanity or a spirit of adventure, and who designates his successes in destroying the honour of women his conquests, has been glorified and idealised in the popular literature of Christendom in a manner to which we can find no parallel in antiquity. When we reflect that the object of such a man is by the coldest and most deliberate treachery to blast the lives of innocent women; when we compare the levity of his motive with the irreparable injury he inflicts; and when we remember that he can only deceive his victim by persuading her to love him, and can only ruin her by persuading her to trust him, it must be owned that it would be difficult to conceive a cruelty more wanton and more heartless, or a character combining more numerous elements of infamy and of dishonour. That such a character should for many centuries have been the popular ideal of a vast section of literature, that it should have been the continual boast of those who most plume themselves upon their honour, is assuredly one of the most mournful facts in history, and it represents a moral deflection certainly not less than was revealed in ancient Greece by the position that was assigned to the courtesan.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, pp. 365-366.

⁵¹ Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, pp. 366-367.

DENUNCIATION OF WOMEN

Status of Women

After a thorough study of the Old Testament, one arrives at the conclusion that the Holy Book is perhaps the most prominent source to discriminate the feminine gender in a negative manner. It suggests inferiority of women, physical, moral as well as spiritual as compared to men. The denunciation of women, therefore, promotes misogyny. We learn from the O.T. that:

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.⁵² (...) And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.⁵³

All this happened before creation of Eve as recorded in the Old Testament:

And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;⁵⁴

Eve as such, had been created from a rib (a part) of man. The said difference in the creation of Adam and Eve is suggestive of inequality of Eve with Adam. While in the Garden, Eve fell prey to the seduction of the serpent. She not only ate of the forbidden fruit herself but also made Adam eat of it. Consequently, both Adam and Eve were driven out of the garden to dwell on Earth. It is worth noting here that Adam had been the prime person and addressee of the commandment prohibiting him eating from the tree of knowledge even before the creation of Eve. In spite of all this, the Christians as well as Jews have singled out Eve as inventor of the violation and sin by seducing Adam. The compilers of the English version of the

⁵² Gen 2:7, KJV.

⁵³ Gen, 2:15-17, KJV.

⁵⁴ Gen, 2:21, KJV.

Old Testament were so obsessed with the misconduct of Eve that **from Eve they coined the term 'evil' to describe anything bad in the world.** Feminine sex represented treachery, seduction and all sorts of immorality.

Male Dominance

Mary Daly elaborately points out that God is called Father, that Christ is male, that the angels have masculine names which shows male dominance everywhere in the church. She quotes de Beauvoir as under:

We encounter this inextricable confusion between man and God in many devotees. The confessor in particular occupies an ambiguous place between earth and heaven. He listens with mortal ears when the penitent bares her soul, but his gaze envelops her in a supernatural light; he is a man of God, he is God present in human form.⁵⁵

De Beauvoir further writes that:

Moreover, the point is not at all that a few women may have the desire to become priests which cannot be fulfilled; it is, rather, that catholic women, by the fact of the exclusion of all women from such a role, are conditioned to believe that **they have an irremediably inferior nature.** This conditioning leads to a devastating mutilation. Seemingly to them the only way to triumph over this debased nature of theirs is **docility before the male,** who serves as the only **intermediary between themselves and a masculine God.**⁵⁶

Islam has emancipated women from the male-dominance and corrupt practice of the priests during the purification rites or the confession of their sins. Women in menstruation get clean after 7 days or as soon as the blood stops. Similarly, they need not offer any sin offering to the priest and to inform him about the end of menstruation or their cleanness after the child birth. In Islam the matter is between the Almighty and the woman concerned. No male intruder has anything to do with such matters. Only the Lord God has the power to forgive the sins. As such, the priests or the pontiffs enjoy no authority to forgive any sin to a male or a female.

⁵⁵ Mary Daly, p. 66.

⁵⁶ Mary Daly, p. 66.

Injustice with the Weaker Sex

It is worth noting here that the disapprobation of 'adultery and all the legal penalties connected with it were restricted to the infractions by wife of the nuptial tie. As regards husbands, they enjoyed immunity from the same. Certain philosophers, however, clearly asserted the reciprocity of the obligation to fidelity in marriage which they found imposed almost exclusively upon wives. Aristotle, "had clearly asserted the duty of husbands to observe in marriage the same fidelity as they expected from their wives". It would, therefore, be unjust that a husband should exact a fidelity he does not himself keep.

Consistent with such an opinion of woman was a doctrine of marriage which perpetuated her situation of helpless subordination and legal impotence. Thus Soto posed the questions of whether it is licit for a man to 'put away' his wife because of fornication and because of adultery, and answered affirmatively to both. Significantly, the question of whether a wife could 'put away' her husband for such offenses was not even raised.⁵⁷

Long after them, St. Paul laid the foundations for the overall sinfulness of entire mankind due to the sin invented or introduced by Eve. **The study of Bible, therefore, reveals hatred and denunciation of women through and through.** In his book titled *Holy Enigma*, Steve Ward endorses the same:

I expect the N.O.W.⁵⁸ ladies must be atheists. If not, they will be after they read the Old Testament. It appears the godly authors of our Holy Bible held only the male species with regard. It's clear—they placed women on the evolutionary scale somewhere **between the amoeba and the slug**. If you read the Old Testament carefully, you'll find there's no biblical distinction between women and slaves.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Mary Daly, p. 101.

⁵⁸ N.O.W. (National Organization for Women) was established on June 30, 1966 in Washington, D.C. It is dedicated among others to making legal, political, social and economic change in the society to eliminate sexism, to end oppression of women and to grant them equitable rights with men.

⁵⁹ Steve Ward, *Holy Enigma!* (New York: Hamilton Books, 2004), p. 58.

Such stiff-necked people, however, forget their own degradation being the procreation of the same amoeba, slug or a slave.

Long after Adam, we find Abraham entering into Egypt. There he repudiated his wife Sarah to save his own skin.⁶⁰ Sarah was taken to the palace of the king of Egypt who gave Abraham flocks of sheep, goats, cattle, donkeys, slaves and camels. Although Sarah was saved due to direct intervention of the Almighty, yet, the composers of the Genesis show no hatred towards the ignominious wife lending act of Abraham. They instead appraise the same in the following words:

And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.⁶¹

It is, therefore, obvious from the above that the writers of the Old Testament valued cattle, silver and gold much more than the piety, chastity and moral uprightness of the wife of Abraham. Due to material gains out of the deal, the theme became popular with them. They, therefore, depict Abraham keen to amass wealth by lending his wife again to King Abimelech.

And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar. And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah.⁶²

God again intervened directly to rescue Sarah from King Abimelech.

And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and women servants, and gave them unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife.⁶³

The pleasant experience of stockpiling wealth in exchange of one's wife had such an allurements for the writers of the Genesis that they reapplied the theme also on Isaac.

And Isaac dwelt in Gerar: And the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, She is my sister: for he feared to say, She is my wife; lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah; because she was fair to look upon. And it

⁶⁰ Gen 12:10-13.

⁶¹ Gen, 13:2 KJV.

⁶² Gen, 20:1-2 KJV.

⁶³ Gen, 20:14 KJV.

came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and, behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife. And Abimelech called Isaac, and said, Behold, of a surety she is thy wife: and how saidst thou, She is my sister? And Isaac said unto him, Because I said, Lest I die for her. And Abimelech said, What is this thou hast done unto us? one of the people might lightly have lien with thy wife, and thou shouldest have brought guiltiness upon us. And Abimelech charged all his people, saying, He that toucheth this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.⁶⁴

It, therefore, transpires from the above that the patriarchs were not only cowards but also great liars and greedy to gain wealth by lending their wives to others. This also alludes to the fact that status of females among the Israelites was lower than sheep, cattle and gold.

Feminine Gender in the OT

Women usually suffered from a burden of inequality under the Jewish Law. **To pay a debt, a man could sell his daughter but not his son into bondage.**

Anti-feminist attitude of the Old Testament is also obvious from various instances of **connivance over the immoralities of the males as compared to strict treatment towards the females**. Genesis did not censure Judah on his adventure with Tamar in the guise of a prostitute.⁶⁵ Later on, learning about her whoredom, Judah ordered to 'take her out and burn her to death'. The said orders had to be withdrawn on the affirmation of Judah's own involvement in the crime. Genesis, however, ascribes no reason for connivance on the misconduct of Judah. Hence collusion of a powerful male figure in the heinous crime not only absolves Tamar of the abasement but she was taken as a heroine to secure the royal pedigree of king David, Solomon and many kings of Israel as their descendants. The story culminates at the birth of Jesus Christ from the same ancestry. Among other heroines, we can count Rehab the Prostitute (Jos Ch. 2), Ruth (Rth Ch. 3, 4) and Bathsheba (2Sam 11:2-5).

⁶⁴ Gen, 26:6-11 KJV.

⁶⁵ Gen 38:15-18.

On careful reading of the Old Testament, one finds misogyny dominating all events and law of the Old Testament times. There were different laws for different people at different times, e.g.

And the daughter of any priest, if she profane herself by playing the whore, she profaneth her father: she shall be burnt with fire.⁶⁶

It is pertinent to note here that the OT suggests no such punishment for the males involved with the daughter of the priest. Bible has different scales and weights to ascertain the intensity and punishment for similar crimes committed by males and the females. Ignominies such as Whoredom, profanity and punishment by burning were reserved only for the females. The male offenders usually enjoyed bright prospects of winning the wives of their choice. Even on refusal by the parents of the victims, the transgressors stood acquitted just by paying a negligible amount to the father of the victim as stated in the following:

And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife. If her father utterly refuse to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins.⁶⁷

As against andocentric attitude of the Bible, the Qur'an suggests equal punishment to male as well as female. (see Al-Qur'an 24:2)

The Old Testament carefully avoids to depict any of the women as a role model of morality. It mostly highlights them as treacherous and immoral in all their deeds. Even Sarah the wife of Abraham had not been blameless. The daughters of Lot and wife of Job and Jael killing Sisera (Judg. 4:17-21) have all been blamed for different types of inequities.

Women had always been subject to degradation, torture, and death on minor offences by the Israelites e.g. we find in the exodus that:

Put to death any woman who practices magic.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Lev 21:9 KJV.

⁶⁷ Exo 22:16 -17 KJV.

⁶⁸ Exo 22:18 GNB.

Kingdom of Priests

In the exodus, we find the words attributed to the Almighty where the Lord addresses the Israelites that:

And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.⁶⁹

Although the afore-stated kingdom of the priests is obvious from the overwhelming influence of the priests on the society yet it is absolutely manifest in the rituals of their worship and obligations of the individuals to appear before the priest to get their approval for various matters in life. The feminine gender had been the most affected victim of the Kingdom of priests. In spite of the fact that women have been denied any participation in the rituals of worship at the temple yet they are obliged to present themselves before the priests again and again even for the certification of cleanliness after childbirth, stoppage of their menstruation and to prove their innocence against the accusations of the suspicious husbands etc. We shall, therefore, be discussing the same in the following:

1) Purification Laws

The antifeminism of Torah is evident from the purification laws quoted below:

The LORD gave Moses the following regulations for the people of Israel. **For seven days after a woman gives birth to a son**, she is ritually unclean, as she is during her monthly period. On the eighth day, the child shall be circumcised. Then it will be thirty-three more days until she is ritually clean from her loss of blood; she must not touch anything that is holy or enter the sacred Tent until the time of her purification is completed. **For fourteen days after a woman gives birth to a daughter**, she is ritually unclean, as she is during her monthly period. Then it will be sixty-six more days until she is ritually clean from her loss of blood.⁷⁰

It has been further elaborated that:

When a woman has her monthly period, she remains unclean for seven days. **Anyone who touches her is unclean until evening. Anything on which she sits or lies during her**

⁶⁹ Exo 19:6 KJV.

⁷⁰ Lev 12:1-5 GNB.

monthly period is unclean. Any who touch her bed or anything on which she has sat must wash their clothes and take a bath, and they remain unclean until evening. If a man has sexual intercourse with her during her period, he is contaminated by her impurity and remains unclean for seven days, and any bed on which he lies is unclean.⁷¹

The Torah did not provide any justification for elongation of the period of uncleanness of women giving birth to a female child as compared to the males. We find no reason for the same except misogyny of the priests of Israel. Islam, therefore, relieved women from such discriminative laws that condemn them without a reason. No doubt a woman or man become unclean due to sexual intercourse, yet both cannot enter holy places, offer daily prayers or touch the holy Qur'an until they take a bath for purification from the unseemliness. Women cannot enter the mosque or Holy Ka'aba for prayers or circumambulation till they take a bath after stoppage of their menstruation, cleanliness from the childbirth or intercourse with their husbands. In all other matters, they will be treated like other women. No human being, the bed, the clothes or utensils become unclean by their touch. Their uncleanness does not go beyond the clothes stained with blood. Although their husbands cannot involve in a sexual intercourse with them, yet they need not separate them from their beds. The strict laws in the Torah or Christianity had no longer been upheld by Islam. A woman can get rid of her uncleanness after 40 days of the birth of the child (male or female) and after stoppage of the menses simply by taking a bath without obtaining any certification from a priest. Similarly, both males and females can attain cleanliness by simply taking a bath after the sexual intercourse. In no case the uncleanness survives after the said ritual. Out of many traditions of the Prophet ﷺ, the following may suffice to vindicate women from prolonged impurity or other restrictions in the matter:

Narrated 'Aysha: The Prophet and I used to take a bath from a single pot while we were Junub. During the menses, he used to order me to put on an Izar (dress worn below the waist) and used to fondle me. While in Itikaf, he used to bring his head near me and I would wash it while I used to be in my

⁷¹ Lev, 15:19-24 GNB.

periods (menses).⁷²

Narrated 'Aysa: The Prophet used to lean on my lap and recite Qur'an while I was in menses.⁷³

Narrated Um Salama: While I was laying with the Prophet under a single woolen sheet, I got the menses. I slipped away and put on the clothes for menses. He said, "Have you got "Nifaas" (menses)?" I replied, "Yes." He then called me and made me lie with him under the same sheet.⁷⁴

Narrated Maimoonah: When ever Allah's Apostle wanted to fondle any of his wives during the periods (menses), he used to ask her to wear an Izar.⁷⁵

According to law of Torah, however, the woman giving birth to a male child has to wait for 40 days and to a female child for 80 days whereafter she has to present herself to the priest at the entrance of the tent of the LORD's presence with a lamb for a burnt offering and a pigeon or a dove for a sin offering as quoted below:

When the time of her purification is completed, whether for a son or daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the entrance of the Tent of the LORD's presence a one-year-old lamb for a burnt offering and a pigeon or a dove for a sin offering. The priest shall present her offering to the LORD and perform the ritual to take away her impurity, and she will be ritually clean. This, then, is what a woman must do after giving birth.⁷⁶

Similarly, after stoppage of menstruation the woman has to appear before the priest with two doves or two pigeons. The priest shall offer one of them as sin offering and the other as burnt offering and in this way he will perform the ritual of purification of her (Lev 15:29-30). Women are, therefore, obliged to reveal their secrets of their private lives and menstruation periods to the priests to obtain the certificate of purification from them.

⁷² *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Volume 1, Book 6, Number 298: translated by Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan, Islamic University Al-Medina Al-Munawwara, Published: 1980, Publisher: Dar Al Arabia, Beirut, Lebanon

⁷³ *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Volume 1, Book 6, Number, 296.

⁷⁴ *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Volume 1, Book 6, Number, 297.

⁷⁵ *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Volume 1, Book 6, Number, 300.

⁷⁶ Lev 12:6-7 GNB.

The power and prestige of the priests did not undergo any change even under the Christianity. Referring to the masculine mediator between a girl and the LORD, de Beauvoir points out that:

God's representatives on earth: the pope, the bishop (whose ring one kisses), the priest who says Mass, he who preaches, he before whom one kneels in the secrecy of the confessional – all these are men... The Catholic religion among others exerts a most confused influence upon the young girl.⁷⁷

According to de Beauvoir, such rites are linked with an idea of the divinity as a male.

On her knees, breathing the odor of incense, the young girl abandons herself to the gaze of God and the angels: a masculine gaze.⁷⁸

2) Wives with Suspicious Husbands

Treatment of wives with suspicious husbands exhibits atrocities of the males over the female sex (Num 5:11-28). The pre-Islamic ignominious, demeaning and cruel treatment meted out to the women had no parallels in the world. The suspicious husband would take his wife to the priests who may proceed in the following manner:

17. He shall pour some holy water into a clay bowl and take some of the earth that is on the floor of the Tent of the LORD's presence and put it in the water to make it bitter. 18. Then he shall loosen the woman's hair and put the offering of flour in her hands. In his hands the priest shall hold the bowl containing the bitter water that brings a curse. 19. Then the priest shall make the woman agree to this oath spoken by the priest: **"If you have not committed adultery, you will not be harmed by the curse that this water brings. 20. But if you have committed adultery, 21. may the LORD make your name a curse among your people. May he cause your genital organs to shrink and your stomach to swell up. 22. May this water enter your stomach and cause it to swell up and your genital organs to shrink."** The woman shall respond, "I agree; may the LORD do so."⁷⁹

23. Then the priest shall write this curse down and wash the writing off into the bowl of bitter water. 24. Before he makes the woman drink the water, which may then cause her bitter

⁷⁷ Mary Daly, p. 65.

⁷⁸ Mary Daly, p. 66.

⁷⁹ Num 5:17-22 GNB.

pain, **25.** the priest shall take the offering of flour out of the woman's hands, hold it out in dedication to the LORD, and present it on the altar. **26.** Then he shall take a handful of it as a token offering and burn it on the altar. Finally, he shall make the woman drink the water. **27.** If she has committed adultery, the water will cause bitter pain; her stomach will swell up and her genital organs will shrink. Her name will become a curse among her people. **28.** But if she is innocent, she will not be harmed and will be able to bear children. **29.** This is the law in cases where a man is jealous and becomes suspicious that his wife has committed adultery. The woman shall be made to stand in front of the altar, and the priest shall perform this ritual. **30.** (SEE 5:29) **31.** The husband shall be free of guilt, but the woman, if guilty, must suffer the consequences.⁸⁰ (See also Deu. 22:13-21.)

It is needles to point out here that both the Numbers and the Deuteronomy enjoin extremely insulting, accursing and fatal treatment of women merely on the suspicions of their husbands. It is worth noting here that only the husbands had the right to prosecute their wives on the basis of a suspicion against them. Old Testament granted no such rights to the women suspecting the immorality of their husbands. In this respect, it is extremely surprising for us that **the priest can loosen the hair of the wife of another man.** The priest, therefore, enjoy more powers on women than their own husbands.

As against Torah, the Qur'an does not allow a husband to initiate any such injurious and deprecating process against his wife without proper evidence for the same. The Islamic court of law can award punishment for fornication to a man or woman only after examining four independent witnesses convincing the court by adducing their evidence to the effect that they they had themselves seen the accused committing the crime or the culprit admits his or her misconduct in the court. In Islam, both men and women enjoy equal rights before the LORD. The Qur'an ordains that:

If any of your women are guilty of lewdness, Take the evidence of four (Reliable) witnesses from amongst you against them; and if they testify, confine them to houses until death do claim them, or Allah ordain for them some (other)

⁸⁰ Num, 5:23-31 GNB.

way.⁸¹

The afore-stated way was revealed subsequently by the injunction quoted below:

Those who commit unlawful sexual intercourse, whether female or male – flog each one of them with a hundred lashes. And let not tenderness for them detain you from what pertains to Allah’s religion, if you truly believe in Allah and the Last Day. And let a party of believers witness their punishment.⁸²

Punishment could be imposed only on the evidence of four independent persons and credible witnesses who affirm having seen the culprit committing the crime. As for those husbands who cannot produce four independent witnesses to prove his allegation, the Lord has directed the Muslims to proceed in the following manner:

As for those who accuse their wives [of unchastity], and have no witness except themselves: the testimony of such a one is that he testify, swearing by Allah four times, that he is truthful (in his accusation), and a fifth time, that the curse of Allah be on him if he be lying (in his accusation). And the punishment shall be averted from the woman if she were to testify, swearing by Allah four times that the man was lying, and a fifth time that wrath of Allah be on her if the man be truthful (in his accusation).⁸³

In case the allegation of the husband against his wife could not be proved due to rebuttal of his wife as quoted above the Qadhi/Judge will announce permanent separation between the husband and the wife following the tradition of the Holy Prophet ﷺ quoted below:

Narrated 'Abdullah: An Ansari man accused his wife (of committing illegal sexual intercourse). The Prophet made both of them takes the oath of Lian, and separated them from each other (by divorce).⁸⁴

This decision is definitely based on Divine Wisdom because binding the suspecting partners together against their will permanently could neither be expected to promote chastity of the spouses nor tranquility in their living. Islam, therefore, does not stress on keeping together the unwilling

⁸¹ Al-Qur'an 4:15 (Yusuf Ali).

⁸² Al-Qur'an 24:2 (Maoududi, tr. By Zafar Ishaq Ansari).

⁸³ Al-Qur'an 24:6-9, *Towards Understanding the Qur'an*, Vol. VI by Maulana Maududi, tr. By Zafar Ishaq Ansari, (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1998), p. 194.

⁸⁴ *Sahih Bukhari*, Volume 7, Book 63, Number 226:

partners or those having mistrust between themselves. The best solution of the problem could, therefore, be to separate them so that they may find new partners to live in peace.

Yet another benediction of Islam on women had been to protect them against the accusations of lewdness on the basis of the color of the children born by them. The following Hadith of the Prophet ﷺ as quoted below may suffice to dispel accusations of profanity on women based on the colors of their children:

Narrated Abu Hurayrah: A man came to the Prophet and said, "O Allah's Apostle! A black child has been born for me." The Prophet asked him, "Have you got camels?" The man said, "Yes." The Prophet asked him, "What color are they?" The man replied, "Red." The Prophet said, "Is there a grey one among them?" The man replied, "Yes." The Prophet said, "Whence comes that?" He said, "May be it is because of heredity." The Prophet said, "May be your latest son has this color because of heredity."⁸⁵

Narrated Abu Hurayrah: A Bedouin came to Allah's Apostle and said, "My wife has delivered a black child." The Prophet said to him, "Have you camels?" He replied, "Yes." The Prophet said, "What color are they?" He replied, "They are red." The Prophet further asked, "Are any of them gray in color?" He replied, "Yes." The Prophet asked him, "Whence did that grayness come?" He said, "I think it descended from the camel's ancestors." Then the Prophet said (to him), "Therefore, this child of yours has most probably inherited the color from his ancestors."⁸⁶

قذف Qadhaf

In Islam, it has been laid down that:

Those who accuse honorable women of unchastity but do not produce four witness, flog them with eighty lashes, and do not admit their testimony ever after. They are indeed transgressors.⁸⁷

It is worth noting here that accusing, incriminating or impeaching any person with a cognizable offence such as

⁸⁵ *Sahih Bukhari*, Volume 7, Book 63, Number 225:

⁸⁶ *Sahih Bukhari*, Volume 8, Book 82, Number 830:

⁸⁷ Al-Qur'an 24:4 (Maoududi, eng tr. By Zafar Ishaq Ansari).

fornication, theft, dacoity or murder etc. for which the accuser fails to adduce convincing evidence in the Islamic court of law as per prescribed manner is termed as qadhaf in the Islamic Shariah. The qadhif (Accuser) will be punished in the following manner:

(ix) If the accuser fails to produce the evidence required to bring about his acquittal from *qadhif*, the Qur'an lays down three penalties: (a) **that he who is guilty of *qadhif* be flogged 80 lashes**; (b) that his testimony not be accepted over after; and (c) that he be branded as a transgressor (*fasiq*). This mention of the punishment is followed by the statement: 'Except Allah is Most-Forgiving, Ever Compassionate'⁸⁸

It is evident from the above that the Qur'an treats false accusation of fornication as a serious offence punishable by 80 lashes during which some of the victims may lose their lives. As such, a husband or a wife cannot accuse the other in a trifling manner. They must produce an incontrovertible proof to establish fornication failing which they will be liable to the punishment enjoined by the LORD.

Islam bestows dignity on women folk. No one except the husband of a woman can loosen her hair. It strictly prohibits disgracing the feminine gender by exposing the hair or head of a woman in public. No priest or a judge can humiliate a woman either by loosening her hair or uttering shameful words of curse as quoted below:

May the LORD make your name a curse among your people. May he cause your genital organs to shrink and your stomach to swell up. May this water enter your stomach and cause it to swell up and your genital organs to shrink." The woman shall respond, "I agree; may the LORD do so."⁸⁹

Islam does not allow anyone to prosecute the other merely on the bases of a suspicion simply because suspicion cannot be treated as a cognizable offence. The Islamic Jurisprudence leaves no room for the husbands to impeach their wives only to get rid of them and to marry another woman of their choice. Islam strongly disapproves any false accusation against faithful and chaste women. It enjoins on them that:

⁸⁸ *Towards Understanding the Qur'an*, Vol. VI by Maulana Maududi, tr. By Zafar Ishaq Ansari, p. 190.

⁸⁹ Num 5:21-22 GNB.

But if ye decide to take one wife in place of another, even if ye had given the latter a whole treasure for dower, Take not the least bit of it back: Would ye take it by slander and manifest wrong? And how could ye take it when ye have gone in unto each other, and they have Taken from you a solemn covenant?⁹⁰

The discrimination among the males and the females is obvious from the fact that the Old Testament does not suggest any such insulting and torturous procedure for men suspected of adultery.

3) Parents' Responsibility to Produce Token of Virginity

The hatred against women and sex is evident from the verses of the OT quoted earlier. Similar misogyny is obvious from the laws concerning sexual purity as quoted from Deuteronomy:

If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her, And give occasions of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid: Then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take **and bring forth the tokens of the damsel's virginity unto the elders of the city in the gate:** And the damsel's father shall say unto the elders, I gave my daughter unto this man to wife, and he hateth her; And, lo, he hath given occasions of speech against her, saying, I found not thy daughter a maid; and yet these are the tokens of my daughter's virginity. **And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city. And the elders of that city shall take that man and chastise him;** And they shall amerce him in an hundred shekels of silver, and give them unto the father of the damsel, because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel: **and she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days.**⁹¹ But if this thing be true, and the tokens of virginity be not found for the damsel: Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father's house: so shalt thou

⁹⁰ Al-Qur'an 24:2 (Yusuf Ali).

⁹¹ According to this law, the suspecting husband will continue teasing his wife till her death. Husband as well as wife will not be trusting each other thereafter. What is the use of such a law which becomes a permanent nuisance for both the partners.

put evil away from among you.⁹²

The vulnerability of women to the accusations against them needs no further explanation. Parents were duty bound to preserve the wedding sheet of their daughter which could be possible only if both the bride and the bride groom spent their wedding night in the house of the parents of the bride. In case, the parents of the accused fail to produce the blood stained cloth as token of her virginity, she was doomed to hell. The accused woman would be stoned to death without any satisfactory proof of the crime. The O.T. admits no virginity in the absence of the blood stained shroud. Just non production of the wedding sheet was enough to subject her to a torturous and despicable death.

On the other hand, the Jewish law shows laxity about the males even if they are caught red-handed in the crime.

If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found; Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days.⁹³

Islam does not allow the believers to initiate any such despicable and gruesome procedure against the women. Oozing of blood has not been acknowledged as the ultimate proof of virginity or chastity of Women. The women may lose the hymen due to certain diseases, accidents, games, age factor or other causes without any sexual intercourse. As such, there can be hundreds of reasons that can destroy the biblical 'token of virginity' without any involvement of the women in any crime. It is also unjust to accuse or kill a woman or to inflict disgrace on her family simply because the blood-stained clothes could not be produced by the parents of the woman concerned. No one should be killed without certainty about the criminal act and without lawful evidence for the same and decision of the court of law. Islam has introduced Qadhaf قذف to stop false accusation or allegations against women. This, therefore, is a great reform to protect and save the innocent women from any exploitation or humiliation before the priests.

⁹² Deu 22:13-21 KJV.

⁹³ Deu, 22:28-29 KJV.

Double Standard for Adultery and Prostitution

The Idea of special guilt attached to the female sex gave support to the double moral standard which prevailed. For example in the cases of adultery the wife had to take back her unfaithful husband, but if the wife was unfaithful, she stands cursed, deserted, and rejected.

The Spanish Dominican, Dominic Soto's (1494-1560) opinion was that:

Thus Soto posed the question of 'whether it is illicit for a man to put away his wife because of fornication and because of adultery', and answered affirmatively to both significantly, **whether a wife could 'put away her husband for such offences' was not even raised.**⁹⁴

A similar trend is evident from the instances of the recent past.

One of the major social facts of large and small cities during the 19th and the 20th centuries in the West was overcrowded female labor force. **The presence of a very considerable number of unskilled or jobless women along with those who needed to supplement their earnings forced them to serve as prostitutes.** It has been reported that:

Between 1864 and 1886 English prostitutes became subject to the Contagious Diseases Acts, which provided for the medical examination of prostitutes in certain naval and military cities. Any woman whom the police identified as or suspected of being a prostitute could be required to undergo immediate internal medical examination for venereal disease. Those found to have the disease could be confined to a lock hospital for a number of months. These measures, in effect, enacted the double standard of sexual morality into law. No action of any kind was taken against the male customers of these women.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Deu, p. 101.

⁹⁵ Donald Kagan & others, *The Western Heritage*, 3rd Ed. (New York: Mcmillan Publishing Company, 1987), p. 814.

The Greek Women

About the Greek women, it has been stated that:

Among the Athenians, the most civilized and most cultured of all the nations of antiquity, **the wife was a mere chattel marketable and transferable to others, and a subject of testamentary disposition.**⁹⁶ She was regarded in the light of an evil, indispensable for the ordering of a household and procreation of children. **An Athenian was allowed to have any number of wives;** and Demosthenes gloried in the possession by his people of three classes of women, two of which furnished the legal and semi-legal wives.⁹⁷

Although the women did not enjoy any enviable positions among the Arabs yet it is stated that:

Among some of the nomads, however, they enjoyed great freedom, and exercised much influence over the fortunes of their tribes. "They were not, as among the Greeks," says Perron, "the creatures of misery."⁹⁸

Like all other nations in the world, the Greek society, too, was dominated by men. Even in the private aspects of life, women were under the control of a male guardian. **Women normally had no choice of husband and divorce was difficult for them to obtain.**⁹⁹ The women had the main function and responsibility of producing male heirs for the husband or his family. Daughters could become heiress to the family only in

⁹⁶ In Islam, the wife is an equal partner in life. God had, therefore, emphatically declared that: "*Ye are members, one of another*" (Al-Qur'an 3:195). As such, women are fully acknowledged as human beings by all means and independent persons in law. They can sue others and can be sued by persons aggrieved against them. As such, they can hold property, enter into contracts and do business independently just like men. Husbands have no lawful justification to snatch or dispose of any of their possessions.

⁹⁷ Grote, *History of Greece*, Vol. vi. P. 136. (Quoted from: Justice Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam*, (Karachi: Pakistan Publication House, 1976), p. 223.

⁹⁸ Syed Ameer Ali, *Spirit of Islam*, pg. 253

⁹⁹ In Islam, explicit consent of the woman is necessary to make the marriage lawful. Although women do not enjoy the right to divorce their husbands themselves but they can always go to the Qadhi/court to get Khula (Divorce or Dissolution of Marriage by surrendering to her husband the Mahr or other gifts taken from him). Khula can be obtained on the averment of the mal-treatment of the husband or even on the grounds that the woman does not like to live with her husband anymore.

the absence of male heirs. In such a case, women were required by law to marry to the next of kin on her father's side. **Women could also be lent by one household to another for purpose of bearing and raising male heirs.**¹⁰⁰ They were usually confined to the women's quarters in the house. The greatest glory of women was to be least talked about by men whether for good or bad.¹⁰¹

According to Mary Daly, **the orthodox Jews in their morning prayer thank God "that He did not make me a woman"** and that Plato seems to have uttered a similar prayer.¹⁰² Beauvoir, therefore, writes that

In the legends of Eve and Pandora, men have taken up arms against women they have made use of philosophy and theology (...)¹⁰³

Zoroastrians, Hindus and the Persians

Never was the condition of woman so bad, never was she held under greater subjection, — a slave to the caprice of man, — than under the Mago-Zoroastrians. The laws of Manu imposed certain rules of chastity, and the stringency of primitive exogamy exercised a restraining effect upon human passions. The Persian in the relations of the sexes recognised no law but that of his own will. He could marry his nearest kindred, and divorce his wives at his pleasure. The system of female seclusion was not confined to the Persians alone. Among the Ionic Greeks, women were confined within the *gynaikonitis*, often kept under lock and key, and never allowed to appear in public. But the Greek *gynaikonomoi* were not, until later times, mutilated specimens of humanity. In Persia, the custom of employing eunuchs to guard the women prevailed from the remotest antiquity. **As in Greece, concubinage was a recognised social institution**, and was interwoven with the foundations of society. The Persian, however, never allowed lewdness to be incorporated with the national worship. He worshipped no Aphrodite Pandemos; nor was Zoroastrian society tainted with that "moral pestilence," the most degrading of all vices, which was universal in Greece, which spread itself afterwards in Rome, and was not even rooted out

¹⁰⁰ Islam treats such practice as fornication punishable in the Law.

¹⁰¹ Donald Kagan & others, *The Western Heritage*, 3rd Ed. (New York: Mcmillan Publishing Company, 1987), p. 74-76.

¹⁰² Mary Daly, p. 62.

¹⁰³ Mary Daly, p. 62.

by Christianity.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ Syed Ameer Ali, *Spirit of Islam*, pg. xxxiii-xxxiv.

CONDEMNATION AND DEPRIVATION OF WOMEN

Syed Ameer Ali writes that:

Both among the Jews and the non-nomadic Arabs the condition of women was degraded in the extreme. The Hebrew maiden, even in her father's house, stood in the position of a servant; her father could sell her if a minor. In case of his death, the sons could dispose of her at their will and pleasure. The daughter inherited nothing, except when there were no male heirs. Among the settled pagan Arabs, who were mostly influenced by the corrupt and effete civilisation of the neighbouring empires, a woman was considered a mere chattel; she formed an integral part of the estate of her husband or her father; **and the widows of a man descended to his son or sons by right of inheritance**, as any other portion of his patrimony. Hence the frequent unions between step-sons and step-mothers which, when subsequently forbidden by Islam, were branded under **the name of *Nikah ul-Makt* (shameful or odious marriages)**". (...) The pre-Islamite Arabs carried their aversion to women so far as to destroy, by burying alive, many of their female children. This fearful custom, which was most prevalent among the tribes of Koraish and Kendah, was denounced in burning terms by Mohammed and was prohibited under severe penalties, along with the inhuman practice, which they, in common with other nations of antiquity, observed, of sacrificing children to their gods.¹⁰⁵

Judaism as well as Christianity did not assign any venerable position to women nor could they protect their rights. None among the wives of the Prophets of the Old reported any religious traditions to the followers of the prophet nor was any of them praised for her piety or righteousness. Women usually had no status or blessedness during the period from Adam to Jesus. Due to misogynistic concept of the early Christian fathers, even Mary the mother of Jesus Christ had no distinction for her chastity, piety or godliness among the Christians for three or four early centuries. Islam was, therefore, the only revealed religion that introduced radical reforms in the inheritance, marital laws and social status of women in their different roles in the society. Men as well as

¹⁰⁵ Syed Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam*, p. 227-228.

women were assigned duties in their respective spheres of life and also their obligations towards the Almighty. Similarly, their rights and rewards from the Almighty were also clearly defined.¹⁰⁶ It was first time in the world that wives of the Prophet ﷺ were given extreme veneration as mothers of the believers. They also held great importance in teaching different precepts of Islam to men as well as women. About 30 percent of the Islamic Law and traditions of the Prophet ﷺ were preserved through them. All information about the private life of the Holy Prophet, his treatment with women and many injunctions of Islam about them had been preserved through reports from his wives.

Daughter, a Misfortune

The Prayer of the Aryan was for sons and more sons. "O Prajapati, Anumati, Sinivali," prays one hymn of the Atharva Veda, "**give a daughter elsewhere, but here a male.**" The universal desire thus having been for sons, the birth of a daughter was considered a misfortune.¹⁰⁷

As against the above, the birth of a son was taken as a boat of salvation a light in the highest heaven. A wife was a comrade but a daughter was taken as a misery.

Woman as Vehicle to Bear Sons:

"From the Rig Vedic times to the later Vedic period it was yet another descent down the rungs of the ladder. The main reason for this is the development of a certain eschatological notions which led to a belief that sons alone were competent to redeem their parents from hell and daughters were incapable of performing, this spiritual function. As these ideas began to take root, women were valued only as the vehicles for bearing sons, and when they were unfit for or unwilling to perform this function, they were considered useless. The idea is emphasized in the Atharva Veda, the Brahmins and to Upanishads.¹⁰⁸

As against this, Islam attaches great blessings on the birth of daughters as a vehicle to relieve man from the horrors of

¹⁰⁶ See Al-Qur'an 3:195, 16:27, 33:35, 76:23, 47:31, 90:9-10, 91:7-10, 2:187, 2:228, 5:5, 4:34. Also see *Woman's Plight*, by Rahmat Ali Choudhary, pages 75-83.

¹⁰⁷ *Woman's Plight*, p. 117, quoted from Thomas, P. *Indian Women Through the Ages*: (Bombay: Asia publishing House, 964), p. 57.

¹⁰⁸ *Woman's Plight*, p. 66 quoted from Boulding, Elice, *The Underside of History: A View of Women Through Time*. West View press Boulder: Colorado, USA, p.54)

Hell. Those who cared well for the daughters and sisters are promised bounteous reward from the Lord i.e. their permanent abode in the paradise. Sayings of the Prophet ﷺ, in this respect, have been quoted in our chapter on 'Women in Islam' s.v. 'Women as Daughters and Sisters'.

Purchased Wives

In many communities, it was a custom to purchase wives. Besides serving as wives, they were also meant to serve as slaves of the husbands. Even the Old Testament shows Jacob purchasing Leah and Rachel through his fourteen years services to their father Laban.¹⁰⁹ In the East and especially in the Southeastern parts of Asia, women were treated as bought slaves of their husbands who had complete authority over the person and property of their wives. In the West, they were being looked upon as slaves of men being useful only to gratify their animal passions. Slave women had no defense against their masters who besides misusing the slave women themselves would also use them as cash crops.

Women slaves were expected to render sexual services along with other duties. "**She was considered a cash crop and impure and evil beast**, disallowed to eat in the company of her husband, forced to sell sexual services for food and above all denied religious rights and rituals."¹¹⁰

Islam forbids purchase of women for sex. It, however, directs believers to marry slave girls after payment of dowry (مهر) to them. Such women are taken as partners in life. Utilization of such women for prostitution or lending them to others is strictly forbidden to the Muslims. These women eat and drink in the company of their husbands and their children are not only freeborn but also enjoy parity of rights with other legitimate descendants of their father in the inheritance from him.

¹⁰⁹ Gen 29:20, 27.

¹¹⁰ *Woman's Plight*, p. 75.

Injunctions Governing the Dissolution of Marriage

Islam takes marriage as a civil contract/covenant between adult, sensible and independent males and females solemnized in the name of God in presence of certain witnesses and other people attending the Marriage/Nikaah ceremony. The nuptial tie, as such, must be an enduring institution not to be broken on frivolous charges. The Qur'an, therefore, has various injunctions for a better and peaceful living between the wives and the husbands. Among those are the following:

O ye who believe! Ye are forbidden to inherit women against their will. Nor should ye treat them with harshness, that ye may Take away part of the dower ye have given them,-except **where they have been guilty of open lewdness;** on the contrary live with them on a footing of kindness and equity. If ye take a dislike to them it may be that ye dislike a thing, and Allah brings about through it a great deal of good. But if ye decide to take one wife in place of another, even if ye had given the latter a whole treasure for dower, Take not the least bit of it back: **Would ye take it by slander and manifest wrong?** And how could ye take it when ye have gone in unto each other, and they have Taken from you a solemn covenant?¹¹¹

The LORD, therefore, hates the dissolution of marriage. Anyhow, in case of dire needs or constant problem to any of the parties the Almighty does not enjoin continuity between the unwilling partners to increase their troubles or to gratify their sexual needs through the unlawful means. In case of strained relations, between the couple, therefore, the Almighty has commanded that:

If ye fear a breach between them twain, appoint (two) arbiters, one from his family, and the other from hers; if they wish for peace, Allah will cause their reconciliation: For Allah hath full knowledge, and is acquainted with all things.¹¹²

But if the efforts for reconciliation also end in a failure then Islam does not insist on continuation of marriage between the partners who hate each other and find it extremely hard to live together. The aggrieved husband has, therefore, been allowed to divorce his wife in three stages.

¹¹¹ Al-Qur'an 4:19-21 (Yusuf Ali).

¹¹² Al-Qur'an, 4:35 (Yusuf Ali).

He will give her notice of Talaq verbally or through writing and separate her from her bed initially for 30 days. During this period, the woman will be provided with shelter and sustenance but she will be required to remain in the same house. This arrangement aims at providing sufficient time to the partners to rethink over the matter. In case no reconciliation takes place between them, the husband gives her the second notice of Talaq verbally or through writing. The second notice provides the husband as well as the wife and their relatives an additional period of 30 days for reconciliation. On the expiry of the said period, the husband is required to wait for another 30 days before the marriage stands dissolved causing permanent separation between the couple.

In case the aggrieved person is a woman, but her husband insists to torture her, she is obliged to go to the Shariah or the civil court to seek dissolution of the marriage. In normal practice the courts are always sympathetic towards women and in case they insist on separation, they are sure to get the decision in their favor within three or four months.

Violence against Women

The United Nations General Assembly defines violence against women in the following words:

Violence against Women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men, and the prevention of the full advancement of women, and that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men.¹¹³

The Hindus as well as the Europeans have a long history of violence against women. It has, therefore, been recorded that:

Jails were used very selectively. When middle and upper class persons were imprisoned, they had separate apartments. The

¹¹³ UNGA Declaration, quoted from *Out of the Shadows: Christianity and Violence against Women in Scotland*, by Lesley Orr Macdonald (Edinburgh: Centre for Theology and Public Issues, 2001), p. 8.

poor were the ones who suffered and starved to death, for no town funds were made available for feeding prisoners in the Middle Ages. The poor depended entirely on charity. Mutilation was another punishment frequently used for the poor, and **half-starved daughters of joy who were sent back into the streets minus their noses could not have lived very long.** The removal of noses, ears, and hands¹¹⁴ was common punishment in Europe and Byzantium and elsewhere in the Mediterranean in the Middle Ages, for both women and men. (Ruche Kircheimer, 1968”).

A more serious danger that lurked for women of the working class was to be kidnapped for the slave trade. **The major slave marts of Europe were in Italy, particularly in Venice and Florence**¹¹⁵

Before proceeding further, we may point out that Islam Strictly prohibits all malpractices as enumerated above.

Kingdom of God or Kingdom of Priests

The Jews as well as the Christians are fully aware of the fact that the departing message of Moses contained the most important promise of the Lord to the Israelites as quoted in Deuteronomy 18:14-21. Even Genesis 49:10 also alluded to the same. The promised prophet ﷺ had also been mentioned at many other places in the Bible which we shall be discussing in detail in another book. Presently, we need to remind the followers of the Bible that there had been no prophet like Moses in the Israelites after him. Only Prophet Muhammad ﷺ fulfilled all the signs foretold about the promised one. In Jeremiah, we find that the Lord had promised to make a new covenant with Israel and Judah which means the believers. It contained the following clauses:

31. Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: **32.** Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake,

¹¹⁴ Islam does not allow removing the noses or ears of men or women against any crime committed by them. Anyhow, if some one commits a theft, the Islamic court can punish him/her by removing the hand of the culprit (Al-Qur'an 5:38).

¹¹⁵ *Woman's Plight*, p. 66. quoted from Boulding, Elice, *The Underside of History: A View of Women Through Time*. West Viewpress Boulder: Colorado, USA, p.498)

although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: **33.** But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, **I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts;** and will be their God, and they shall be my people. **34. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD:** for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.¹¹⁶

Two points need special attention of the readers:

1. That the God will put His law in the inward parts of the believers and He will write it on their hearts.

All the people of the world know that only the Muslims are engaged in fulfilling the traditions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ which is tantamount to putting the law in their inward parts. Besides this, only the followers of the Holy Prophet ﷺ contain hundreds of millions of people who have learnt the Qur'an by heart. There is no other nation in the world which has learnt their scriptures by heart. This is an undeniable proof of the fact that only Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was the recipient of the covenant which has been written on the hearts of his followers and they continue to recite it during almost all times of prayers or during occasions of rest and vacation.

2. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them.

Since each and every man can have a direct approach to the scripture and the sayings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, therefore, they are not bound to abide by the instructions of the priests. The new covenant, therefore, had no provision for the kingdom of the priests which has wrought a havoc to create moral depravity among the masses under the authority of the pontiffs and the priests. Islam has relieved men as well as women from the clutches of the priests who have unlawfully enslaved the laity and live luxurious lives on the earnings of others. They themselves

¹¹⁶ Jer 31:33-34 KJV.

have usurped the prerogatives of the Almighty and claim to be the owners of hell and heaven and also the faith of the people. Denying all their false claims, Islam preaches worship of no one except the Lord God believing him to be the only sustainer of life and giver death as well as master of the Day of Judgment. No one except Him can hear the prayers of His slaves nor can anyone else forgive even the slightest of the sins.

Only almighty Allah enjoys the power to forgive or to punish His slaves and to decide about their final abode whether Hell or Heaven. Human beings must, therefore, pin all their hopes in the creator of heavens and earth. All people must, therefore, repent of their sins before the Almighty and seek forgiveness from him. Turning to the Lord alone, therefore, saves the poor people, the women and the children from undue exploitation by all priests, pontiffs, Brahmins or fake Muslim Pirs claiming superiority or salvation of the people. Since the earlier scriptures had become mutilated over a period of thousands of years, therefore, the Almighty was gracious enough to reveal His final testament (The Qur'an) which is free from any corruption whatsoever. The Qur'an is, therefore, the final message of the Lord to all the people of the world including Jews, Christians, Muslims and others. It points out that:

They take their priests and their anchorites to be their Lords In derogation of Allah, and (They take as their Lord) Christ the son of Mary; yet they were commanded to worship but one Allah. There is no god but He. Praise and glory to him: (far is He) from having the partners they associate (with Him).¹¹⁷

Although we find religious pretenders throughout the world yet in the present context we are concerned primarily with the clergymen in the Christendom. A glimpse of the misdeeds of the clergymen from certain interviews of women from Scotland recorded in the project report by Lesley Orr Macdonald 2001 which contained the following:

Violence by Clergymen

One of the women interviewed reports that:

"I went through absolute hell – I lost over 20 kilos, and all my confidence. It got to the stage where I couldn't go out. The

¹¹⁷ Al-Qur'an 9:31 Yusuf Ali.

congregation knew nothing – they still don't, and no one in the church made it possible for me to feel it would be safe to share my agony."¹¹⁸

Here are reports from many other unnamed victims of the clergy:

"I'm angry because the abuse stopped me from being all I could be. I hated that experience of being used. The clergy should be careful with people. Playing with folk's bodies and souls is all wrong, and the carelessness is so hurtful to your sense of worth."¹¹⁹

"I was so shocked, and so humiliated, and just felt so shamed by what was happening that I was part of the shameful behaviour; that I became blameworthy for having the abuse visited upon me. My deepest trust was betrayed, my self-esteem stolen from me by the priest who abused me, and by the church which let him get away with it, and wouldn't help me. I can't form proper relationships; the shame is almost impossible to bear. I feel that my soul has been burnt out, leaving an empty shell"¹²⁰

Lesley Orr Macdonald continues to produce statements of certain other victims interviewed by her as recorded in the following:

"I really didn't think the church would believe what was going on. In fact, I knew they wouldn't, because this very sanctimonious man was highly thought of and a successful minister. He seemed to be a very caring person, who did marriage counseling."¹²¹

"For me, the most devastating thing was the breaking of trust. I was suicidal – and I still feel that way sometimes. It was compounded by the fact that no one would believe me. So I was labeled as a crazy woman who had a grudge against the church. I want to believe in the healing power of touch and love, but my boundaries have been eroded by the abuse, and I have to protect myself. Still, I have a very deep sense of responsibility for the feelings of others. So there was terrible tension and pain for me when one day after confession my current **priest asked me for a hug as penance**. Hugging

¹¹⁸ Lesley Orr Macdonald, p. 16-17

¹¹⁹ Lesley Orr Macdonald, *Out of the Shadows: Christianity and Violence against Women in Scotland*, (Edinburgh: Centre for Theology and Public Issues, 2001), p. 17.

¹²⁰ Lesley Orr Macdonald, p. 19.

¹²¹ Lesley Orr Macdonald, p. 22-23.

anyone, let alone a priest, is hard for me. And it annoyed me that he let his own needs intrude and impinge on my pain like that. You know I have a real lack of faith in the clergy now."¹²²

I had been sexually abused as a child and went to my priest for counseling. He made me repeat with him, the acts I had been forced to perform with my father, and told me it was God's will, as part of the healing process. Afterwards I felt suicidal: dirty and ashamed and betrayed. The priest carried on in his position of authority and trust, while I was forgotten, desolate and abandoned. I have left the church: all it did was to hurt me, then desert me when I desperately needed help. It was too concerned to save its own face and reputation.¹²³

"After being sexually abused by two different priests – as a child and as an adult – I went to the cardinal. I got the strong impression that he was scared to encounter a woman who wasn't in awe of him, and wasn't scared to speak directly about the way the church had treated me. He didn't know what to say, far less what to do. Forgiveness was his big line. I should forgive the priests for what they had done. It was just a get-out; a way for him to avoid dealing properly with the issues."¹²⁴

"I'm not seeking vengeance. But I do want the church to acknowledge the reality that sexual abuse goes on, and that it is a criminal offence: an offence against the victim and an offence against God."¹²⁵

"Nobody knew what was going on, and I did feel it wasn't my place to say. Who was going to believe me? **I didn't think anyone would believe a minister would be capable of such horrendous attacks.**"¹²⁶

Marriage with Clergy

The worst sufferers among women had been those who got themselves married with members of the clergy. Here are some of the examples recorded by Lesley Orr McDonald:

For all women who suffer abuse, and perhaps in a particular way for those who are married to clergy, the increasing sense and reality of isolation is devastating. It is one of the basic mechanisms employed by those who abuse others, to avoid disclosure, or even acknowledgement of what is going on. Too often, women believe that it has happened to no one else

¹²² Lesley Orr Macdonald, p. 23.

¹²³ Lesley Orr Macdonald, p. 24.

¹²⁴ Lesley Orr Macdonald, p. 24.

¹²⁵ Lesley Orr Macdonald, p. 26.

¹²⁶ Lesley Orr Macdonald, p. 18.

(especially in the church!) Too often, they do not know whether, or if, there is anyone they can tell. Practical and emotional constraints trap them, so that it requires immense courage to consider leaving (and statistically, the time that women's lives are most in danger from violent partners, is when they attempt to escape).¹²⁷

"I didn't know 'that sort of thing' happened. The abuse started in our second charge, when my husband didn't really fit in with the church, and he became verbally abusive if things weren't going his way. Eventually he became terribly introverted. I think the only way he could show his anger was by hitting me, or kicking me, or shouting at me, punching me."¹²⁸

"Towards the end I felt the hypocrisy of the situation very badly. The last time I went to church with him, he prayed for victims of abuse and those who mistreated them. After that, I just couldn't go back to church. It was all so false – but he was very plausible, and that made my circumstances so much worse."¹²⁹

Estrangement from the Church and the God

Other victims also had reported their experience as recorded in the following:

"The man who abused me used to say it was God's will, and that I had to obey him, because he was God's holy representative. I was so confused and distraught. How could God want me to suffer – he was supposed to love me. But then, that man used to say he loved me too. **But I had grown up being told to obey the will of God, and that I would burn in hell if I didn't.** The whole situation, when I look back on it now, was disgusting and sickening. But it took me long years when **I really did feel like I was burning in hell, before I got that man and his hideous god out of my body and out of my life.**"¹³⁰

"I sometimes think that God just made me to get punished for the bad things other people have done to me. I couldn't escape from feeling that I was being watched and judged all the time by that big angry God. He was Father, just like my father. If so, they were just showing me what happened to naughty little girls. Thankfully, I know now that God could not

¹²⁷ Lesley Orr Macdonald, p. 18.

¹²⁸ Lesley Orr Macdonald, p. 14.

¹²⁹ Lesley Orr Macdonald, p. 17.

¹³⁰ Lesley Orr Macdonald, p. 20.

be God and be like that. At least I know it intellectually, but you don't get over that kind of spiritual betrayal just in your head."¹³¹

"I felt very abandoned by the church, but actually didn't think God had abandoned me. I wasn't even angry with God. I just thought, if this is what things are like when God is in my life, **it might be better without him.**"¹³²

Distressed Wives

Selections from some other interviews of women are also recorded in the following:

"I lived in terror of the physical cruelty, and shook with fear whenever he came into the room, but the mental abuse somehow ate away so much more. He knew he had power and control over me, and acted like a big bully, who always demanded his own way."¹³³

"He was a very demanding husband. He used to cajole me into sex and then claim afterwards, "you see, I know what's best for you, don't I?" But he did abuse and rape me often - oh, it was terrible at times. But he would say, "You are my wife, there's no such thing as rape in marriage. This is MY right, and you'll do as I say. I was paralyzed by fear, and only a determination to protect my children released some energy to drag me out of that total erosion of personhood. For too long, I accepted the degradation and humiliation. I kept thinking about the words of the marriage service: "For better, for worse, in sickness and in health". I was getting the worst, and I was part of the sickness, and somehow it all seemed to be my fault."¹³⁴

"He constantly put me down, made a fool of me - saying I was no good, and how could my parents love me. I found that very hard. I became no longer a person. I lost my personality because I was so constricted, so fearful. I was very afraid, and ruled by panic attacks. I just lost myself, really."¹³⁵

"I became introverted. I totally lost my confidence. I wanted to try harder and harder all the time to be good, to be a proper wife, to please him, to stop him hurting me - and the more I tried, the worse it got. **There was no 'I' left in the end** - just a shadow fading into walls."¹³⁶

¹³¹ Lesley Orr Macdonald, p. 20.

¹³² Lesley Orr Macdonald, p. 21.

¹³³ Lesley Orr Macdonald, p. 15.

¹³⁴ Lesley Orr Macdonald, p. 16.

¹³⁵ Lesley Orr Macdonald, p. 17.

¹³⁶ Lesley Orr Macdonald, p. 17.

Islam has brought emancipation of women as well as men by abrogating the unlawful tradition of confession of sins before the pontiffs or the priests. They being elected or appointed by human beings cannot be taken as representatives of the Lord. There is no proof anywhere that Moses, Jesus or any other prophet of the Lord had quoted the Almighty relinquishing his power of amnesty or forgiveness to the violators of His commandments i.e. to the priests who themselves lacked power to save their own selves in the Hereafter. Such priests had forgotten the true teachings of the prophets that only repentance and doing good thereafter could be the sure way towards salvation. Mathew States that:

1. In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, 2. And saying, **Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**¹³⁷

From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, **Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**¹³⁸

Similarly Gospel of Mark also contains that:

And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the **kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye**, and believe the gospel.¹³⁹

Jesus did not advise anyone to confess his sins before any priest or pontiff as was made a must by the later Christian fathers. The best method was to humble oneself before the Almighty and to seek forgiveness from Him as a sinner. In a parable recorded by Luke, we find Jesus narrating that:

13. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, **God be merciful to me a sinner. 14. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other:** for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.¹⁴⁰

All this shows that neither John the Baptist nor Jesus Christ demanded from the people to confess the actual sins committed by them. All that they required was that people must confess their sins before the Lord and repent not to

¹³⁷ Mat 3:1-2 KJV.

¹³⁸ Mat, 4:17 KJV.

¹³⁹ Mar 1:15 KJV.

¹⁴⁰ Luk 18:13-14 KJV.

repeat the same in future. Disclosure of one's sins before the priests or anyone else had never been advised in any of the scriptures including the OT, the Zabur, the New Testament or the Qur'an. God very well knows the sins of all human beings who ever lived on earth. There is no need of reiterating the same or disclosing the names of their partners in the sin to the priests who could defame some of the sinners and even exploit women, girls and children for unlawful sex with them. We have quoted a number of examples of such exploitations in the forgoing part of this chapter.

Qur'anic Guidance for Repentance

The Qur'an has given us glorious examples of the words of repentance used by many of the exalted prophets of the Lord. We, therefore, start from the guidance the Lord had provided to the first parents of the humankind on Earth. After realizing their fault in the garden both Adam and Eve were disparately beseeching the Almighty to save them from the ruination wrought by their own hands. The Lord revealed to them the words with which to implore Him for mercy and forgiveness. Consequently, they supplicated to the Lord in the following words:

قَالَا رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا وَإِنْ لَمْ
تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ
الْخَاسِرِينَ

23. They said: "Our Lord! we have wronged Our own souls: if Thou forgive us not and bestow not upon us Thy Mercy, we shall certainly be lost."¹⁴¹

Similarly, Prophet Jonah had faltered from the place of his appointment without seeking guidance from the Almighty. On realizing his fault, he too sought repentance from the Almighty as recorded in the Qur'an:

وَذَا النُّونِ إِذْ ذَهَبَ مُغَاضِبًا فَظَنَّ
أَنْ لَنْ نَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ فَنَادَى فِي
الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

¹⁴¹ Al-Qur'an 7:23 Yusuf Ali.

سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

87. And remember Zun-nun, when He departed In Wrath: He imagined that we had no power over Him! but He cried through the depths of darkness, "**There is no god but thou: glory to thee: I was indeed wrong!**"¹⁴²

The Qur'an also quotes the words of supplication of Abraham to seek mercy of the Lord. He said:

رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِي مُقِيمَ الصَّلَاةِ وَمِنْ
ذُرِّيَّتِي رَبَّنَا وَتَقَبَّلْ دُعَاءِ
(٤٠) رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ
وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْحِسَابُ
(٤١)

40. O My Lord! make me one who establishes regular prayer, and also (raise such) among My offspring O Our Lord! and Accept Thou My Prayer. 41. "O Our Lord! cover (Us) with Thy forgiveness - me, My parents, and (all) believers, on the Day that the reckoning will be established!"¹⁴³

Prophet Solomon also beseeched the Lord that:

(...) رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ
الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَيَّ
وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَدْخِلْنِي
بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِي عِبَادِكَ الصَّالِحِينَ
(١٩)

19. (...) "O My Lord! so order me that I may be grateful for Thy favours, which Thou hast bestowed on me and on My parents, and that I may work the righteousness that will please thee: and admit me, by Thy Grace, to the ranks of Thy righteous Servants."¹⁴⁴

The Lord himself has guided the believers not to get disappointed from His mercy. He himself pronounced that:

¹⁴² Al-Qur'an, 21:87 Yusuf Ali.

¹⁴³ Al-Qur'an, 14:40-41 Yusuf Ali.

¹⁴⁴ Al-Qur'an, 27:19 Yusuf Ali.

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَى
 أَنْفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِنْ رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ
 إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ
 هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ (٥٣)

53. say: "O My servants who have transgressed against their souls! despair not of the Mercy of Allah. for Allah forgives all sins: for He is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful."¹⁴⁵

وَإِنِّي لَغَفَّارٌ لِمَن تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ
 صَالِحًا ثُمَّ اهْتَدَى (٨٢)

82. "But, without doubt, I am (also) He that forgives again and again, to those who repent, believe, and do right, who,- In fine, are ready to receive true Guidance."

وَإِذَا جَاءَكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ
 بِآيَاتِنَا فَقُلْ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ كَتَبَ
 رَبُّكُمْ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ أَنَّهُ مَنْ
 عَمِلَ مِنْكُمْ سُوءًا بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابَ
 مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَنَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ
 (٥٤)

54. when those come to Thee who believe In Our Signs, say: "Peace be on you: **your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule of) mercy:** Verily, if any of you did evil In ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amend (his conduct), Lo! He is Oft- forgiving, Most Merciful.

The Almighty had also taught the believers to pray in the words quoted below:

رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ
 أَخْطَأْنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا
 إِصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ
 قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا
 طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَاعْفِرْ

¹⁴⁵ Al-Qur'an, 39:53 Yusuf Ali.

لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا
فَانْصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ
(٢٨٦)

286. (...) "Our Lord! Condemn us not if we forget or fall into error; Our Lord! Lay not on us a burden like that which Thou Didst Lay on those before us; Our Lord! Lay not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear. Blot out Our sins, and grant us Forgiveness. have Mercy on us. Thou art Our Protector; help us against those who stand against faith."¹⁴⁶

In Surah-Al-Muminoon, the Almighty had guided us to pray in the following words:

وَقُلْ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ وَارْحَمْ وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ
الرَّاحِمِينَ (١١٨)

118. so say: "O My Lord! grant Thou forgiveness and Mercy for Thou art the best of those who Show mercy!"¹⁴⁷

These are only some of the examples for repentance from sin and seeking forgiveness of the Lord. The priests or the pontiffs are neither the Almighty Lord nor do they enjoy any power to forgive sins to others or even to absolve themselves from the sins committed by them. For a detailed discussion on salvation, please refer to our chapter '*Guidance for Salvation*' in our book '*Original Sin and Salvation*'.

¹⁴⁶ Al-Qur'an, 2:286 Yusuf Ali.

¹⁴⁷ Al-Qur'an, 23:118 Yusuf Ali.

WOMEN, CHRISTIANITY & THE WEST

Women in the New Testament

We do not find a kind and considerate treatment with women anywhere in the New Testament which hardly shows any veneration even for Mary the mother of Jesus Christ. Jesus did not preach respectable and kind treatment with women even if they happened to be the mothers of his followers. He himself scornfully refused the request of the Canaanite Woman, begging mercy from him:

But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.¹⁴⁸

We, however, cannot believe that a kind hearted prophet like Jesus Christ could have scornfully rejected the most humble plea of a distressed woman as narrated in Mathew (15:21-27). Ultimately it was not in response to the mercy appeal of the helpless woman but due to "great faith" shown by her that he healed her daughter.

The fact is that both the Old Testament and the New Testament do not provide us guidance to treat politely or kindly with the women whether they are our mothers, sisters, wives or daughters. About the wives, St. Paul writes that:

22. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. **23.** For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. **24.** Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.¹⁴⁹

Turning from the Church to the aristocracy it is clear the laity as a whole took over with complacency the Church's dogma of the subjection of women. Implicit obedience was part of the ideal of marriage set out in the majority of didactic works addressed to women. Even such a loving and sensible bourgeois husband, as the ***Menagier de Paris***, **likens the wife's love of husband to fidelity of dog for master** and declares that all his orders, just and unjust, important and

¹⁴⁸ Mat 15:26 KJV.

¹⁴⁹ Eph 5:22-24 KJV.

futile, reasonable and unreasonable, must be obeyed.¹⁵⁰

In this way both Church and aristocracy combined to establish the doctrine of the woman's subjection, a doctrine which was apt to be linked with the notion of her essential inferiority.

Ever since the blemish on Eve in the Genesis that Eve was the transgressor of the divine commandment, she has been blamed as **temptress** to induce Adam to sin. People of Book, therefore, continued to perpetuate deprecation of the female gender as representing the essence of evil in the world. **Humiliation and despise has been the fate of women in the Bible and in the literature of the Jews as well as the Christians.** The Evangelists, too, were obsessed with misogynistic concepts inherited from the Israelites. They were fully aware of God's injunctions in the Ten Commandments e.g.:

Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.¹⁵¹

Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.¹⁵²

The same message of the LORD had been re-emphasized by Moses in the following:

Each of you must respect your mother and your father, and must keep the Sabbath, as I have commanded. I am the LORD your God.¹⁵³

In addition to the repeated injunctions of the LORD to honor the parents¹⁵⁴, Moses also pronounced the curse against those who dishonor their parents:

'God's curse on anyone who dishonors his father or mother.' "And all the people will answer, 'Amen!'¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ Eileen Power, *Medieval Women*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 7th Printing:1996), p. 16.

¹⁵¹ Exo 20:12 KJV.

¹⁵² Deu 5:16 KJV.

¹⁵³ Lev 19:3 GNB.

¹⁵⁴ Exo 20:12, Lev 19:3, Deu 5:16, Deu 27:16.

¹⁵⁵ Deu 27:16 GNB.

The Qur'an and traditions of the Prophet have repeatedly emphasized politeness, obedience and respect for the parents e.g.

Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him, and that ye be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in thy life, **say not to them a word of contempt**, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honour.¹⁵⁶

And We have enjoined on man (to be good) to his parents: in travail upon travail did his mother bear him, and in years twain was his weaning: (hear the command), "Show gratitude to Me and to thy parents: to Me is (thy final) Goal."¹⁵⁷

Jesus, being a follower of Moses, was, therefore, duty bound to be polite and respectful towards his mother. Probably it was due to the misogyny of the Evangelists that they did not show him venerating his mother. They depict Jesus turning down rudely the request of his mother:

Jesus saith unto her, **Woman, what have I to do with thee?** mine hour is not yet come.¹⁵⁸

We can hardly believe that Jesus could have given such impolite or insulting response to his mother. To address his own mother in the manner he addressed the prostitute and the Canaanite woman (Mat 16:28) could not be expected even from an ordinary person what to talk of Jesus Christ one of the the most distinguished prophets of the Lord. The disrespect in the words and tone of Jesus Christ was so evident that even the Jews and the Christians could not ignore the same. The Expositor John Gill has, therefore, translated the rudeness into great respect, tenderness and affection of Jesus towards his mother. He articulates that:

Calling her "woman", as it was no ways contrary to her being a virgin, (Gal₄:4), so it was no mark of disrespect; it being an usual way of speaking with the Jews, when they showed the greatest respect to the person spoken to; and was used by our Lord when he addressed his mother with the greatest tenderness, and strongest affection, (Joh₁₉:26).¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Al-Qur'an 17:23 (Yusuf Ali).

¹⁵⁷ Al-Qur'an, 31:14 (Yusuf Ali).

¹⁵⁸ Joh 2:4 KJV.

¹⁵⁹ *John Gill's Exposition of the Bible*, Dr. John Gill, D.D., (1697-1771) (Published in 1746-1766, 1816), s.v. John 2:4.

Although the Christians did not mind the insolence of their God or Son of God towards the so-called mother of God yet to set the record right, the Qur'an vehemently refuted the false allegation of discourtesy of Jesus towards his mother. The Qur'an quotes Jesus having said:

And (God) hath made me (Jesus) blessed wheresoever I may be, and hath enjoined upon me prayer and almsgiving so long as I remain alive, **And (hath made me) dutiful toward her who bore me, and hath not made me arrogant, unblest.**¹⁶⁰

Referring to Zachariah, the LORD said:

(And it was said unto his son): O John! Hold fast the Scripture. And we gave him wisdom when a child, And compassion from Our presence, and purity; and he was devout, **And dutiful toward his parents. And he was not arrogant, rebellious.**¹⁶¹

Instead of evaluating women merely on the basis of their beauty or capability to earn more and more money, Islam does not allow any disrespect or misutilization of sisters, daughters and wives of the believers. As regards mothers, Islam venerates them to such an extent that to serve them respectfully is a guarantee to enter the paradise. Qur'an refers to the mothers in the following words:

In pain did his mother bear him, and in pain did she give him birth. The carrying of the (child) to his weaning is (a period of) thirty months.

While addressing his mother Jesus seems to have made no distinction between her, the Canaanite woman and the adulterous woman about whom John reports that:

When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?¹⁶²

It was the legacy of the misogynistic mind of the patristic periods and the Jewish culture that continued to disgrace and humiliate women in the Christian West up to the beginning of the 19th century. They failed to acknowledge the affectionate role of their mothers to rear them in the childhood and the complementary role of women as wives, sisters and daughters in their lives. Besides subjecting

¹⁶⁰ Al-Qur'an 19:31-32 (Muhammad M. Pikthal).

¹⁶¹ Al-Qur'an, 19:12-14 (Muhammad M. Pikthal).

¹⁶² Joh 8:10 KJV.

them to duties both at Home and outside in the modern times, they also have put beautiful women on display for selling all sorts of goods. As soon as a woman gets aged and loses her charms she becomes victim to the **fear of fifties** and they start suffering from depression day by day. As compared to this, women in the advanced age whether mothers, wives or sisters get more and more respect with the advancement of their age in the Eastern communities. Older people in Islam become the central authority in the home. This is the reason that instead of sending them to the old houses, the Muslims take due care of them and try to provide them with the comforts within their reach. Let the Western people ponder whether they have done something good for women or they have unduly exploited and deprived them of their respect and security as they receive in the Islamic community.

Patristic Periods

Early Christian fathers denigrated the women in many ways. Their primary grievance was based on the legendary guilt attributed to Eve in the story of Fall. Tertullian¹⁶³ scornfully addressed Eve in the following words:

'Do you not know **that you are Eve?** ... **You are the devil's gateway** ... How easily you destroyed men, the image of God. Because of the death which you brought upon us, **even the Son of God had to die.**'¹⁶⁴

This shows that the God, His son and all other human beings were helpless to rectify the wrong done by Eve. Even the crucifixion of Jesus Christ to expiate the sin of Adam and Eve was of no effect at all. Eve continued to exist as greatest obstacle in the way of salvation through the females descended from her. The males, however, had little effect of the degradation through her. Skipping over the remarks of many other Christian fathers, about Eve and the female sex, we may refer to the opinion of St. Augustine who set forth the theory of biological inheritance i.e. transmission of sin to the descendants of Adam and Eve through the sexual intercourse which, by the passage of

¹⁶³ Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus (155-240) a prolific early Christian author from Carthage in the Roman province of Africa.

¹⁶⁴ Mary Daly, p. 87.

time, became an explanatory principal for the universality of sin. He held Adam and Eve responsible for introducing sin and death which corrupted the souls of all their descendants.

The writings of church fathers bring vividly into sight the fact that there had always been a problem of women and the church. Jerome¹⁶⁵ says that:

As long as woman is for birth and children, she is different from man as body is from soul. But when she wishes to serve Christ more than the world, then she will cease to be a woman and will be called man (vir).'¹⁶⁶

A similar idea is expressed by Ambrose¹⁶⁷, who remarks that:

She who does not believe is a woman and should be designated by the name of her sex, whereas **she who believes progresses to perfect manhood, to the measure of the adulthood of Christ.** She then dispenses with the name of her sex, the seductiveness of youth, the garrulousness of old age.¹⁶⁸

Mary Daly, therefore, writes that:

In Genesis, the fathers found an explanation of women's inferiority which served as guarantee of divine approval for perpetuating the situation which made her inferior ... Ambrosiaster remarks that "woman is inferior to man since she is only a portion of him". (He) states baldly that "**man is made to the image of God but not woman.** Augustine wrote that only man is the image and glory of God. Since the believing woman, who is co-heiress of grace, cannot lay aside her sex, she is restored to the **image of God only where there is no sex, that is, in the spirit.**"¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Saint Jerome (347–420) was a Christian priest, confessor, theologian, and historian known for his translation of Bible into Latin commonly known as "Vulgate".

¹⁶⁶ Mary Daly, p. 85.

¹⁶⁷ Aurelius Ambrosius (c.340–397), was a bishop of Milan who became one of the most influential ecclesiastical figures of the 4th century. He was a Stanch opponent of Alienism.

¹⁶⁸ Mary Daly, p. 85.

¹⁶⁹ Mary Daly, p. 86.

Image of God is Found in Man

Thomas Aquinas¹⁷⁰ held that female is defective as regards her individual nature. She is, in fact, a misbegotten male. He wrote:

'Father and mother are loved as principles of our natural origin. Now the father is principle in a more excellent way than the mother, because he is the active principle, while the mother is a passive and material principle. Consequently, strictly speaking, the father is to be loved more.'¹⁷¹

He also wrote that:

'in a secondary sense the image of God is found in man, and not in woman: for man is the beginning and end of woman; as God is the beginning and end of every creature.'¹⁷²

Mary Daly, therefore, observes that:

In contrast to their modern counterparts, women in the early centuries of the Christian era—and, in fact, throughout nearly all of the Christian era—had a girlhood of strict seclusion and of minimal education which prepared them for **the life of mindless subordinates**. (...) Valued chiefly for their reproductive organs, which also inspired horror, and despised for their ignorance, **they were denied full personhood**. Their inferiority was a fact; it appeared to be 'natural'. Thus, experience apparently supported the rib story, just as the myth itself helped 'explain' **the common experience of women as incomplete and lesser humans**. The vicious circle persisted, for the very emancipation which would prove that women were not 'naturally' defective was denied them in the name of that defectiveness which was claimed to be natural and divinely ordained. Thus, Augustine taught that the order of things subjugates woman to man. Jerome wrote that it is contrary to the order of nature, or of law, that women should speak in the assembly of men. He maintained that the man should be commanded to love his wife, whereas the woman should fear her husband:

For love befits the man; fear befits the woman. As for the

¹⁷⁰ Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274 AD) was an Italian Dominican friar, Catholic priest, and Doctor of the Church. He was an immensely influential philosopher, theologian, and jurist in the tradition of scholasticism.

¹⁷¹ Mary Daly, p. 91.

¹⁷² Mary Daly, p. 93.

slave, not only fear is befitting him but also trembling.¹⁷³

The Problem of Women and Church

The 14 epistles ascribed to St. Paul preceded all other books in the New Testament. **These writings expose him as a misogynistic person anticipating the kingdom of God imminently.** The Gospels and other writings in the New Testament were written decades after the epistles of St. Paul. As such, the Gospels, the Acts, and Revelations etc. bear the influence of St. Paul. Gospels also reflect certain concepts of Essenes on St. John the Baptist as well as Jesus Christ. The Evangelists, therefore, describe Jesus depreciating matrimony in general. The early Christian fathers considered women as obstacles to salvation:

The view of woman as **instrument of the Devil**, a thing at once inferior and evil, took shape in the earliest period of Church history and was indeed originated by the Church. Its roots lay not in the words of Christ but in those of St. Paul, and it found its expression in the lives and writings of the early Christian fathers and its embodiment in the ethics and philosophy of monasticism. As ascetic ideals rose and flourished, and monasticism became the refuge of many of the finest men, in the turmoil of the Dark Ages, there came inevitably into being the concept of **woman as supreme temptress, *Janua diaboli*, the greatest of all obstacles in the way of salvation.**¹⁷⁴

According to de Beauvoir's¹⁷⁵ 'church by its doctrine' implicitly conveys the idea that **women are naturally inferior.** In pagan religions of antiquity, the mother goddess was worshiped. Judaism and Christianity represent a reaction against this. It was a mother that woman was fearsome; It is in maternity that she must be transfigured and enslaved. This enslavement was accomplished symbolically in the **cult of Virgin Mother of God**, who is glorified only in accepting the subordinate role assigned to her.

For the first time in human history the mother kneels before her son; she freely accepts her inferiority. This is the

¹⁷³ Mary Daly, p. 86-87.

¹⁷⁴ Eileen Power, p. 16.

¹⁷⁵ Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986), a French writer, intellectual, existentialist philosopher, political activist, feminist and social theorist.

supreme masculine victory, consummated in the cult of the Virgin – it is the rehabilitation of woman through the accomplishment of her defeat.¹⁷⁶

Mary Daly continues to write that:

The point is that women are encouraged to identify with this image of Mary, and to do so has devastating effects. Speaking of the servile condition of women in the Catholic countries, de Beauvoir says: 'And that flows in large part from women's own attitude: the cult of the Virgin, confession, and the rest lead them towards masochism.' In this way, de Beauvoir sees Catholic dogma as contributing to the conditioning of women to adore and serve man.¹⁷⁷

Referring to interpretation of Bible, Mary Daly observes that:

The idea of **woman's special sinfulness**, stemming from commonly held interpretations of the Bible, combined with a notion of her inferior 'nature', affirmed in Aristotelian philosophy, thus made it seem that the **sociological fact of woman's subordination was inscribed in the heavens**.

De Beauvoir maintains that **Christian antifeminism has always been linked to anti-sexuality**. In fact, 'in a religion that holds the flesh accursed, woman becomes the devil's most fearsome temptation'. Perhaps one might have thought that this should work both ways, since women can also be tempted by men. Not at all.

'And, of course, since woman remains always the Other, it is not held that reciprocally male and female are both flesh; **the flesh that is for the Christian the hostile Other is precisely woman**. In her the Christian finds incarnated the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil. All the Fathers of the Church insist on the idea **that she led Adam into sin**.¹⁷⁸

Medieval Women

Referring to the Medieval ideas about women Elieen Power Writes that the church as well as aristocracy:

were in general agreement in placing woman in subjection to man, neither the concept of marriage nor the law took note of her as a complete individual, as what Maitland calls '**a free**

¹⁷⁶ Mary Daly, p. 60.

¹⁷⁷ Mary Daly, p. 60.

¹⁷⁸ Mary Daly, pp. 62-63.

and lawful person' and by her sex she was inferior to man.¹⁷⁹

Jacques de Virty (d. 1240) writes that:

'Between Adam and God in Paradise there was but one woman and she had no rest until she had succeeded in banishing her husband from the garden of delights and **in condemning Christ to the torment of the Cross.**'¹⁸⁰

Although it is said that there had been higher regard for women during the 12th and the 13th centuries yet the time was not free from anti-feminist writings. **The literature of the period contained numerous instances of brutal attacks upon the whole female sex.** There had been many anecdotes having for its subjects the perfidy of women. Many stories expressed intense contempt for women from antiquity to the times of the writers. Eileen Power, therefore, records that:

Another device consists in calling up a long list of all the women in the Bible or in antiquity from Eve downwards who led men astray; such was the **book of 'wicked wives'** which the Wife of Bath's fifth husband insisted on reading to her every evening. Marriage was never condemned but was apt to be denigrated with faint praise in the writings and pronouncements of great churchmen, from (perhaps) Gregory the Great, to Hugo of St Victor and St Thomas Aquinas himself. The position which the Church assigned to marriage in the scale of human conditions is best defined by that most moderate of medieval codifiers of doctrine, Albertus Magnus. **'Contenance in marriage is a good condition,** but not an excellent one, **since it is more excellent in widowhood and most excellent in virginity.'** On its part medieval literature abounds with diatribes against marriage such as *Miroir de Mariage* of Deschamps and *Quinze Joies de Mariage* ascribed to Antoine de la Sale.¹⁸¹

Now if widowhood and virginity are excellent conditions of being then the spoiler of the said condition are men and not women. The Christian scholars like Albertus Magnus¹⁸², therefore, suggested widowhood and virginity as the best way to correct the mistake of God who had said "*It is not*

¹⁷⁹ Eileen Power, *Medieval Women*, p. 10.

¹⁸⁰ Eileen Power, *Medieval Women*, p. 14.

¹⁸¹ Eileen Power, *Medieval Women*, p. 30.

¹⁸² Albertus Magnus, (1193–1280 AD), also known as Saint Albert the Great and Albert of Cologne, was a German Catholic Dominican friar and bishop.

good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him” (Gen 2:18 KJV). Alternately, we will have to confess that **“women were the special gift of God for men and by denouncing them we show our ungratefulness and arrogance against the Almighty”.**

The position of women and their status during the Middle Ages was not much different from earlier periods in the West. The image of medieval women was strongly influenced by male Christian clergy whose ideal was the celibate life of chastity, poverty and obedience. The Christian theologians depicted women as physically, mentally and morally weaker than men. The medieval church and society, therefore, sanctioned coercive treatment of women **including corrective wife beating.** Women, as the Bible clearly taught, were the ‘weaker vessel’. Medieval women had two options in life; to become either a subjugated housewife or a confined nun which was an option for only a very small number of unmarried women from the upper most classes, **entrance required a dowry (dos), it could be almost as expensive as wedding although usually it was less.** We, therefore, reiterate the words of Mary Daly in the following:

In feudal law a woman could be endowed by land, and we know of endowable women holding land by every title recognized by law, including the most exalted ones. But in practice, feudal marriage carried with it a certain denigration of woman as a person. While the Church subordinated woman to her husband, feudalism subordinated her to her fief. All feudal marriages of convenience were dictated by interests of land. In some ways an heiress – indeed an heir too – was as much a chattel tied to the soil as was the manorial villein.¹⁸³

The subjection or inferiority of women, however, did not extend to the entire female sex. There were honorable exceptions to the rule. Hence, after quoting certain instances of great individual women and saints, Mary Daly concludes that such extraordinary cases simply ignore the fact that countless women were completely stifled by an environment that worked against the development and expression of their talents. She adds that:

The prevailing low status of women was fixed by law and

¹⁸³ Mary Daly, *The Church and The Second Sex*, p. 19.

custom. **By canon law a husband was entitled to beat his wife.** Canon law allowed only the dowry system for matrimony, and under this system **women were defenseless.** Moreover, since they were legally incompetent, **they were not considered fit to give testimony in court.** In general, they were considered as man's property. **Since for feudal lords marriages were a way of gaining property, women were pawns in the game of acquiring wealth.**¹⁸⁴ The Church's complicated marriage laws offered ample opportunity for trickery and abuse. Thus, while the history of the Middle Ages reveals a few glorious feminine personalities that side of the scales is extremely outbalanced by the masses of mute and anonymous victims of hypocrisy and oppression.¹⁸⁵

For centuries after the Middle Ages, theological opinions concerning women did not change radically. Founder of the Jesuits, **Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) thought he saw a similarity between women and Satan.** The Spanish Dominican, Dominic Soto (1494-1560) held that the female sex is a natural impediment to the reception of Holy Orders. He, therefore, believed that marriage perpetuated her situation of helplessness, subordination and legal impotence.¹⁸⁶

Witchcraft

Witchcraft means the use of magic or sorcery. The Oxford English Reference Dictionary records that:

Witchcraft, which has a long history around the world, became associated in Christianity with demonic possession and rejection of God in Europe in the early Middle Ages; by the late 12th century cases were being dealt with by the Inquisition. **Mass persecutions began to take place in the 15th century in Europe; many people (usually women) were tried as witches,** often after accusations from neighbours claiming to have suffered harm; witches were defined by Catholics and later also by Protestants as heretics who obtained their power through a pact with the Devil. **After a papal bull of 1484, roughly a thousand people in England were hanged or burned for witchcraft, mostly under Elizabeth I and James I; the last execution was in**

¹⁸⁴ Islam has no provision that a husband should acquire even the least part of the property of women whether received by her through inheritance or gifted by her husband.

¹⁸⁵ Mary Daly, *The Church and The Second Sex*, p. 97-98.

¹⁸⁶ Mary Daly, *The Church and The Second Sex*, pp. 100-101.

1685. On the Continent, and in Scotland, the use of torture produced far more victims and bizarre confessions of Sabbaths and night-flying. Belief in witchcraft was also widespread in Puritan communities in North America; more than thirty people were convicted of witchcraft in the notorious trials at Salem, Massachusetts, in 1692. Although belief in witchcraft declined in Europe and America after the 17th Century, it continues to be a powerful force in many preliterate and tribal societies. In the 20th century a new kind of witchcraft (known as **Wicca**) emerged in parts of Europe and North America, claiming its origins in pre-Christian pagan religions.¹⁸⁷

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines witch as a woman who is believed to have magic powers especially to do evil things.

The Oxford English Reference Dictionary defines witch as a sorceress esp. a woman supposed to have dealings with the devil or evil spirits. **Witch, therefore, denotes an ugly old woman; a hag.** A man with magic powers is termed as a wizard.

Witch Hunts or Women Hunts

The *Western Heritage* has it that:

A good 80% of victims of witch-hunt were women, the vast majority between forty-five and sixty years of age and widowed. This fact had suggested to some that misogyny fueled the witch-hunts. Based in male hatred and sexual fear of women, and occurring at a time when women threatened to break out from under male control, witch-hunts, it is argued, were simply women-hunts. Older women may, however, have been vulnerable for more basic social reasons. As a largely non-productive and dependent social group, ever in need of public assistance, **older and widowed women became natural targets for the peculiar "social engineering" of the witch-hunts.**¹⁸⁸

It has also been observed that:

The most striking social correlation is between witchcraft and women. Although in certain areas and for brief periods of time

¹⁸⁷ *Oxford English Reference Dictionary*, 2nd ed. Edited by Judy Pearsall & Bill Trumble, (Oxford: University Press, 2006), 'witchcraft', p. 1660.

¹⁸⁸ *The Western Heritage*, 3rd Ed. Donald Kagan, p. 444.

more men were accused than women, **over the entire history of the witch craze 75 percent of the accused were women.** In the sixteenth century many more women were living alone than men. Given the patriarchal structure of European society at the time, a woman living alone without the support of father or husband had little influence and little legal or social redress for wrongs. Such women were often reduced to begging and depending on the charity of their neighbors. They also naturally tended to grumble or curse more than persons having effective influence in society. A physically weak, socially isolated, financially destitute, and legally powerless old woman who provoked resentment in her neighbors became an easy target for projection.¹⁸⁹

The Western Heritage, has described the death toll usually by burning alive in the following:

Between 1400 and 1700 courts sentenced an estimated 70,000-100,000 people to death for harmful magic (*malificium*) and diabolical witchcraft. In addition to inflicting harm on their neighbors, these witches were said to attend mass meetings known as *sabbats*, to which they were believed to fly. They were also accused of indulging in sexual orgies with the Devil who appeared at such gatherings in animal form, most often as a he-goat. Still other charges against them were cannibalism (they were alleged to be especially fond of small Christian children) and a variety of ritual acts and practices designed to insult every Christian belief and value.¹⁹⁰

The craze among the inquisitors to hunt and convict the victims of witchcraft can be assessed from the report quoted below:

One inquisitor, Remigius took great credit to himself for having, during fifteen years **convicted and burned nine hundred.**¹⁹¹

Rivalry of Witches with the Clergy

Aside from misogyny, the rivalry of the clergy had fueled the fire of hunting down the witches and the wizards.

The Christian clergy also practiced magic, that of the

¹⁸⁹ *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd Ed. Editor in Chief, Lindsay Jones, (Farmington, Hills MI: Macmillan Reference USA, Thomson Gale, 2005) p. 9773.

¹⁹⁰ *The Western Heritage*, 3rd Ed. p. 443.

¹⁹¹ Charles Mackay, *Memoirs of Extraordinary Popular Delusions*, Vol. 2, (London: Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, 1841), p. 197.

holy sacraments, and the exorcism of demons was one of their traditional functions within society. Fear of demons and the Devil, which the clergy actively encouraged, allowed them to assert their moral authority and enforce religious conformity. **In the late thirteenth century the church declared that only its priests possessed legitimate magical power.** Since such power was not human, theologians reasoned, it had to come either from God or from the Devil. If it came from God, then it was properly confined to and exercised only by the church. Those who practiced magic outside the church evidently derived their power from the Devil. From such reasoning grew accusations of "pacts" between non-Christian magicians and Satan. This made the witch-hunts a life-and-death struggle against Christian society's worst heretics and foes, those who had directly sworn allegiance to the Devil himself.¹⁹²

In the 4th Ed. of the '*The Western Heritage*' we find the topic 'Why More Women than Men are Witches'. The misogynistic trend of the writers is evident from the following excerpts from the same:

But the natural reason [for women's proclivity to witchcraft] is that she is more carnal than a man, as is clear from her many carnal abominations. And it should be noted that there was a defect in the formation of the first woman, since she was formed from a bent rib, that is, a rib of the breast, which is bent as it were in a contrary direction to a man. And since through this defect **she is an imperfect animal**, she always deceives (. . .) Just as through the first defect in their intelligence that are more prone to abjure the faith; so through their second defect of inordinate affections and passions they search for, brood over, and inflict various vengeance, either by witchcraft, or by some other means. Wherefore it is no wonder that so great a number of witches exist in this sex . . . [Indeed, witchcraft] it is better called the heresy of witches than of wizards, since the name is taken from the more powerful party [that is, the greater number, who are women]. blessed be the Highest Who has so far preserved the male sex from so great a crime.¹⁹³

A few passages from Tatha Wiley also elaborate the interpretation quoted above:

Early church theologians picked up on 1 timothy's perspective and broadened its scope, blaming women not only for the

¹⁹² *The Western Heritage*, 4th Ed. p. 460.

¹⁹³ *The Western Heritage*, p. 461.

origin of sin but regarding them as sin. Tertullian's invective against women exposes a not-so-latent Misogynism in his interpretation of Genesis 3. Addressing women, he writes:

You are the devil's gateway: you are the unsealer of the (forbidden) tree: you are the first deserter of the divine law: you are she who persuaded him who the devil was not valiant enough to attack. You destroyed so easily God's image, man. On account of your desert – that is, death – even the son of Man had to die.

This explanation of the origin of sin depicts the root sin by which human beings distort the created order. Andro-centric or male-centered ideologies of female inferiority and evil distorts the relations of mutuality that should exist between women and men. Theologians have pointed to the sin of Eve to ground the subjugation of all women to male rule. Domination extends beyond gender, but the form of the root sin remains the same. The natural superiority of some (by class, ethnicity, religion) is elevated as the legitimation of their rightful domination over others in the personal, social, and religious realms of human living.

From the vantage point of gender, **the theology of original sin in the Christian tradition has not been beneficial for women.** Embedded in the doctrine's conceptual world is a gender dualism of male superiority and female inferiority, a denial that women possess the image of God fully as person's, and the assumption that male privilege and rule is the divinely guaranteed order of creation. An example is John Chrysostom's retelling of Genesis 3. Speaking in God's voice, he writes:

Because you abandoned your equal, who was sharer with you in the same nature and for whom you were created, and you chose to enter into conversation with the evil creature the serpent, and to take the advice he had to give, accordingly I subject you to him in future and designate him as your master for you to recognize his lordship, and since you do not know how to rule, learn well how to be ruled.¹⁹⁴

Women Since 1600 A.D.

Mary Watt (1585-1645) the founder of 'English Ladies' started conducting schools for girls. Such schools were to be governed directly by women, responsible solely to the Pope, independently a bishop's and of men's orders. For her pains, Mary Watt was rewarded with persecution by clerical

¹⁹⁴ Tatha Wiley, *Original Sin*, p. 157.

enemies. William Herison, Archpriest of England wrote to Pope Gregory XV in 1621 A.D.:

Describing the characteristics of women, the archpriest reflected the opinions prevalent in the Church: **since that sex is 'soft, fickle, deceitful, inconstant, erroneous, always desiring novelty, liable to a thousand dangers'**, the church Fathers had cried out against them.¹⁹⁵

The eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth century theologians continued to justify the traditional subordinate and legally helpless situation of married women. **Cardinal Gousset (1792-1866) held that the administration of property belonged to the husband alone. He could sell or dispose of it as he wished, without the agreement of his wife.**¹⁹⁶

Women in the West had been suffering from oppression, injustice and inequality with men. It was perhaps for the first time that in 1791, a women revolutionary named Olympe de Couges had demanded certain rights for women. Important points in her declaration of rights were that:

A woman is born free and lives equal to man in her rights, Social distinctions can be based only on the common utility...

The law must be the expression of the general will; all female and male citizens must contribute either personally or through their representatives to its formation; it must be the same for all: male and female citizens, being equal in the eyes of the law, must be equally admitted to all honors, positions, and public employment according to their capacity and without other distinctions besides those of their virtues and talents ...

No one is to be [persecuted] for basic opinions; woman has the right to mount the scaffold; she must equally have the right to mount the rostrum [a public speaking platform].¹⁹⁷

The said spirit of liberty continued to win the rights for women both in Europe and America. Women did achieve a great success in many of their rights but they still have many of the grievances against the men dominated society in the West who in spite of many laws favorable to women, do not accord them the honor due to them or accept their equality of rights with them.

¹⁹⁵ Mary Daly, *The Church and The Second Sex*, p. 104-105.

¹⁹⁶ Mary Daly, *The Church and The Second Sex*, p. 107.

¹⁹⁷ *World History, Perspectives on the Past*, p. 488.

Women Had Few Legal Rights

Working women of the middle 1800's faces yet another problem. They had no legal right to the money they earned. An unmarried woman's wages legally belonged to her father. If she married, everything she owned or earned became her husband's property.

Women could not sue or make contracts. Often if a woman's husband died, she could not even act as guardian of her children. **In 1900, no country in Europe allowed women to vote.** Even in Britain, where Queen Victoria was perhaps the most popular monarch the country had ever had, women could not vote or serve in Parliament. "Women are creatures of impulse and emotion," declared one British member of Parliament in 1906. "They do not decide questions on the ground of reason as men do." Thousands of women (and men) throughout the developed world disagreed.¹⁹⁸

Although by the late 1800's more women worked outside the home, they still faced economic and political restrictions. Many women in the United States and Britain believed that the right to vote would improve their status. Although women used a variety of tactics to call attention to their cause, **they achieved only limited success by 1914.**¹⁹⁹

Similarly, women could not get proprietary rights on their own property up to 1930 in England.

It is worth noting here that the women were acknowledged as full humans and independent persons who enjoyed the proprietary rights on their property w.e.f. the first quarter of the 7th century AD. The Western countries, therefore, lagged behind the Islamic reforms to give proprietary rights to women by at least 1300 years.

Counter Doctrine of Superiority of Women

During the Medieval ages, there had been certain vain efforts made by some people to present a counter-doctrine to show superiority of women over men. Mary Daly, therefore, records that:

There were attempts to balance the alleged guilt-laden condition of the female sex, but these, unfortunately, did not take the form of an admission of guilt shared by the sexes. Instead, **Eve was balanced off by Mary.** Thus, for example,

¹⁹⁸ *World History, Perspectives on the Past*, p. 602.

¹⁹⁹ *World History, Perspectives on the Past*, p. 612.

Origen²⁰⁰ remarks that as sin came from the woman so does the beginning of salvation. Augustine wrote that woman is honored in Mary. He claimed that since man (homo) fell through the female sex, he was restored through the female sex. **'Through the woman, death; through the woman life'**. This type of compensation produced an ambivalent image of woman.²⁰¹

Similarly, Eileen Power writes that:

On the other hand both the Church and the aristocracy asserted, with no apparent sense of inconsistency the counter doctrine of the superiority of women. **The cult of the Virgin and the cult of chivalry grew together**, and both rose conspicuously to the surface from some time in the twelfth to the end of the thirteenth centuries when medieval culture reached its highest point. Both were perhaps signs of a reaction – this time a romantic reaction – against the somber realities of an earlier and cruder age. (...) The succession found its most characteristic expressions in the cult of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It spread with great rapidity and soon pervaded every manifestation of popular creed. It was already supreme by the eleventh century and remained supreme until the end of the Middle Ages. Great pilgrimages to the Virgin's shrines, Chartres, Rocamadour, Mont Saint-Michel, Laon, Soissons, Ipswich, Walsingham, and many scores more, criss-crossed the countries of Europe, while most great churches, not specifically her own, provided themselves with Lady Chapels.²⁰²

Courtly love as understood in this society had certain clearly marked insignia. In the first place it **was held to be impossible between husband and wife**. 'Marriage is no excuse for not loving' is the first of the rules of love. It was based on the conviction that **affection binding married persons** – though real and valuable – **had nothing in common with the sentiment of love, which might, and indeed must, therefore, be sought outside marriage**. Conditions which governed feudal marriages are sufficient to explain the dogma which sounds so perverse to modern ears. It was the essence of courtly love that it should be a thing freely sought and freely given; it could not be found in the marriage of feudalism, which was so often a parental arrangement, binding children in the interests of land. **Fiefs**

²⁰⁰ Origen of Alexandria (184–253 AD) also known as Origen Adamantius, was an early Christian scholar, ascetic, and theologian.

²⁰¹ Mary Daly, *The Church and The Second Sex*, p. 88.

²⁰² Eileen Power, *Medieval Women*, p. 19.

marry but men and women love. True, the adored lady was always a wife but always someone else's wife. This was one of the rules of the game.

This peculiar conception of love had another characteristic. In it the lady stood in a position of superiority towards her lover as uncontested as the position of inferiority in which a wife stood towards husband. **Love was, as it were, feudalized; the lover served his lady as humbly as the vassal served his lord.** He had to keep her identity secret from the world, concealing it under some fictitious name when he praised her in song. He must not only bear himself with the utmost humility towards her, showing infinite patience in the trials to which her caprices and disdains must (by all the rules) submit him, but must strive unceasingly to make himself worthy of her by the cultivation of all the knightly virtues. For it was an axiom of the theory that every admirable quality had its root in love.²⁰³

It is obvious that a theory which **regarded the worship of the lady as next to that of God** and conceived her as the mainspring of brave deeds, a creature half romantic half divine, must have done something to counteract the prevalent doctrine of woman's inferiority. The process of placing women on a pedestal had begun, and whatever we may think of the ultimate value of such an elevation, it was at least better than plunging them, as the early Fathers were inclined to do, in the bottomless pit.

Nevertheless, it is easy to exaggerate the extent to which medieval chivalry was able to elevate the actual position of women in medieval society as a whole. The exaltation of the lady was the exclusive ideal of a small aristocratic caste; those outside the caste had no part in any refining influence of the courtly ideal.²⁰⁴

The readers will, therefore, observe that by drawing a contrast between the extreme holiness of Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ and the utter degradation and depravity of Eve the mother of the entire humanity on earth, the Christian thinkers have counter-balanced the worst one with the best. Mary though a symbol of piety and uprightness was resurrected only to elevate and sanctify the cult of loving the ladies i.e. wives of others by the Christian knights. They, therefore, regarded the worship of the lady as next to that of God. This exaltation of ladies as such and display of knightly chivalry and love had its roots in the violation of the commandments of the Lord. In spite

²⁰³ Eileen Power, *Medieval Women*, p. 23-24.

²⁰⁴ Eileen Power, *Medieval Women*, p. 26-27.

of this, the knightly love was usually limited to a very small faction of the society. It pertained only to certain knights, loving courtly ladies who had always been the wives of others. There was no question of venerating and loving women as mothers, wives, sisters and daughters. This was the reason that only a small number of highly placed and beautiful women could be adored during their youth. It, therefore, had no impact on acknowledging the female sex as full human beings enjoying parity of rights and love from the males in all walks of life.

Preference of Women over Men

A manuscript in the Cambridge University Library has it that:

Woman is to be preferred to man, to wit in material: Adam made from clay and Eve from side of Adam; in place: Adam made outside paradise and Eve w'in; in conception: **a woman conceived God which man did not do**; in apparition: Christ appeared to a woman after the Resurrection, to wit and Magdalene; in exaltation: a woman is exalted above the choirs of angels, to wit the Blessed Mary.' St Bernadine even declares thus: 'It is a great grace to be a woman: more women are saved than men.'²⁰⁵

The in depth study of Christian theology, therefore, exposes the fact that the Christianity as we know it today is neither based on the OT nor the true teachings of Jesus Christ. Instead of deriving their faith from the Old Testament or the words of prophets from Moses to Jesus Christ, they preferred to follow the early Christian fathers like St. Paul and his followers. Most of these early Christian fathers were Greek speaking Roman citizens. Being subjects of Rome, they found it convenient to Christianize the Roman culture, law, mythology and faith. One emperor, one faith, one language and culture was the requirement of the time. Christian fathers could differ from the Romans only on the pain of death. They, therefore, absorbed all prevailing creeds, law and customs of the Roman world to create uniformity in the Empire. Although they believed themselves to be Christians but to conform to the Roman set up, they renamed their identity as 'Roman Catholics'.

²⁰⁵ Mary Daly, *The Church and The Second Sex*, p. 14.

The readers must know that Catholicism means universalism i.e. amalgamation of all faiths instead of Christianity.

Christianity, thereafter, was no longer solely dependant on the preachings of Christ or commandments of the Lord in the OT. They, therefore, had to compromise on various firm foundations of faith to catholicize themselves. Consequently, the most attractive package offered by any of the Christian fathers became the popular faith of Christianity. Ordinary Christians had no access to most of the contents of the scriptures. They depended on the priests who always preached good news to them. The net result was ignorance from the revealed word of God or accurately preserved words of Jesus Christ which caused a great diversion from the true faith and rituals enjoined by the Lord. Man-made law to fulfill the requirements of the majority of the Christians at different times had been leading them from one extreme to another throughout the history of Christianity. Most of the Christian doctrines had, therefore, been finalized long after the death of Jesus Christ. Everything in faith is alterable even today and the forthcoming councils will be enjoying freedom to amend or to introduce new articles of faith.

STORY OF FALL AND THE ORIGINAL SIN

The Story of Fall in the Bible

We firmly believe that both the Jews and the Christians have been committing a grave mistake in interpreting the verses of the genesis pertaining to the events in the Garden of Eden in the 2nd and 3rd chapters of the Genesis. Due to lack of knowledge about God's purpose to create humankind and His wisdom to place Adam, Eve and Satan in the garden for some time, they concocted different stories themselves which had eventually been adopted as basis of faith especially by the Christians. We shall, therefore, be providing the readers with the true events revealed by the Almighty to have a better understanding of the story of fall and to absolve Adam and Eve from the blame of transmitting sin to all their progeny. Since the earliest description about the Garden of Eden is found in the Genesis, we prefer to narrate the story and its interpretation from the Old Testament.

Blemish on Eve

Before discussing the story of fall in the genesis we would like to highlight the fact that both the Jews as well as the Christians take great pleasure to impeach Eve as the inventor of Sin and death. Both factions try to excel each other in depicting Eve as one of the most polluted woman causing expulsion of man from the Garden and transmitting sinfulness to all her descendants on earth. Although the OT had not accused her in that manner yet the Jews and the Christians concocted different stories to prove Eve as the guilt-laden ancestress of all human beings. The Jews even blame her for fornication with Satan.

It has been recorded that:

Judaism possessed, indeed, the legend of the pollution of Eve by Satan, and of the taint transmitted by her to her posterity.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁶ F. R. Tennant, *The Sources of the Doctrines of The Fall and Original Sin* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1903) p. 176.

Not only this, but the Jews also alleged that Cain had been born due to Satan's sex with Eve.

The Jewish literature also had it that:

'The prevailing explanation of Satan's actions is his desire to possess Eve. One or other of these various legends as to the devil's envy of man was doubtless present to the mind of the writer of the Book of Wisdom when he spoke of death entering into the world by the envy of the devil.'²⁰⁷

Mr. Tennant writes that:

It has been observed that the motive ascribed to the tempter, in bringing about the ruin of Adam and Eve, **is almost always envy**. But the sources differ very considerably as to how the devil's envy was excited.²⁰⁸ According to one form of the tradition, Satan's jealousy and hostility to man was called forth before his expulsion from heaven, and its occasion was his being summoned to worship Adam²⁰⁹, along with the rest of the angels.²¹⁰

Debasing Remarks about Eve

'Eve' was the name given to first woman in the Genesis. Eve means life or life-giving, i.e. 'havvah'. It also means mother of all living (human beings)²¹¹. The word seems to have been derived from Hebrew *chawwah*, interpreted as meaning 'ancestress', 'mother', 'the living one', the one

²⁰⁷ F. R. Tennant, *The Sources of the Doctrines of The Fall and Original Sin*, p. 246-247.

²⁰⁸ Instead of a revelation from the LORD, the Christian as well as the Jews depend on their own conjectures. They, therefore, continue to probe in the dark. Let them know the true purpose of man's creation, the cause of his stay in the Garden and the reason for their transfer to earth is revealed by the Holy Qur'an.

²⁰⁹ It is incorrect to assume that the Lord had summoned the angels to worship Adam. The Old Testament had strictly forbidden the Israelites to worship any God besides the LORD. Since the Almighty had created Adam with the predestination to install him as vicegerent of the LORD on Earth, therefore, He made everything in the skies and on earth subservient to the cause of man. Angels being the superior most creatures of the LORD were also commanded to bow before Adam, to acknowledge his status and to accept his superiority over them. There had been no concept of worshipping anyone besides the Lord in the Ten Commandments.

²¹⁰ F. R. Tennant, *The Sources of the Doctrines of The Fall and Original Sin*, p. 246.

²¹¹ Gen 3:20.

who gives birth.²¹² Eve, therefore, denoted something good and virtuous. Relying upon Genesis (3:1-24), the Christians took her as the symbol of sin and transgression. They propagate that Eve was the originator of sin in the humankind. **The English term 'evil' seems to be a derivative from Eve.** Referring to Eve they denigrate the female gender in the world. Jacques de Verty (d. 1240), expresses his feelings against Eve in the following words:

Between Adam and God in Paradise, there was but one woman and she had no rest until she had succeeded in banishing her husband from the garden of delights and in condemning Christ to the torment of the Cross.²¹³

Some of the quotations from anonymous authors reflect the same:

Never any good came out of female domination. God created Adam master and LORD of living creatures, but Eve spoiled all.

No Woman, not even a prude, is long embarrassed in the most difficult situation; she seems always to carry in her hand the fig-leaf given her by our mother Eve.

The Only thing that has been taught successfully to women is to wear becomingly the fig-leaf they received from their first mother.

The woman in us still prosecutes a deceit like that begun in the garden; and our understandings are wedded to an Eve as fatal as the mother of their miseries.

Denigration of Women

In the absence of men all women are chaste.

A woman is an angel at ten, a saint at fifteen, a devil at forty and a witch at fore-score.

There is nothing in the world worse than a woman.

Women are the gate of hell.

Women are not a hobby, they are a calamity.

The world is full of women and **the women full of vile.**

²¹² *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary, Commentary reference series*, vol. 8, (Washington D.C.: Reviwe and Herald Publishing Association, 1960), p. 328.

²¹³ Eileen Power, *Medieval Women*, p. 14.

There is no evil so terrible as woman.

Women are one and all a set of vultures.

Nothing is worse than a woman even a good one.

Oh' women', perfect women! What distraction was meant to mankind when thou wast made a devil.

There is no mischief done but a woman is one.

Women give themselves to God when the devil wants nothing more to do with them.

When there is an old maid in the house, a watch dog is unnecessary.

Of all men, Adam was the happiest, he had no mother in Law.

Don't trust your horse in the field nor your wife in your home.

Hell is paved with women's tongue.

Woman is at once apple and serpent.

Woman is the organ of the devil.

The tongue of women is their sword and they take care not to let it rust.

Jewish literature preceding the Christian Era is replete with accusations against Eve. Ben Sira held that sin entered into the world as an actuality in Eve's transgression:

We therefore conclude that Ben Sira was the precursor of the talmudic teaching as to the Fall rather than that of the more serious pseudepigraphic literature of the first century A.D. Although he holds that sin entered into the world as an actuality in Eve's transgression, and also recognises that all men are sinners (viii. 5) and are descended from Adam (xvii. i), he nevertheless implies that the Fall brought no moral incapacity in its train, no inherited corruption of nature, to diminish man's power of self-determination. If any excuse is offered for human depravity, it is that of our natural and essential frailty referred to in xvii. 30—32 and elsewhere; and its ultimate source, or rather its ground in so far as man's will is excepted, is God, not Adam's self-perversion.²¹⁴

In the footnote, it has been explained:

It is noteworthy that Eve is stated in xxv. 24 to have been the first sinner. Not only does this faithful following of the letter of Gen. make it less likely that B. Sira held any theological doctrine of Original Sin, such as later attached itself exclusively to Adam, but this important verse is only

²¹⁴ F. R. Tennant, *The Sources of the Doctrines of The Fall and Original Sin* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1903) p. 117.

introduced casually; the context shows that the emphasis is laid, not on the introduction of sin and death, but on woman.²¹⁵

Instead of ameliorating the blemish against the women in the OT, the New Testament has taken it as foundation of their faith. The doctrine of Original Sin developed by St. Paul and his followers gained momentum to stigmatize Eve, more and more, with the passage of time. Although it is an admitted fact that Eve was the venerable mother of all human beings, yet how painful it is to observe the Jews and the Christians implicating her with almost all sorts of sinfulness. Some legends also show her polluted by Satan and giving birth to Cain. Even the New Testament also singles out Eve as the originator of sin:

And it was not Adam who was deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and broke God's law.²¹⁶

Women have also been condemned in the following:

11. But do not include younger widows in the list; because when their desires make them want to marry, they turn away from Christ, **12.** and so become guilty of breaking their earlier promise to him.²¹⁷ (...) **15.** For some widows have already turned away to follow Satan.²¹⁸

3. But I want you to understand that Christ is supreme over every man, the husband is supreme over his wife, and God is supreme over Christ. (...) **8.** for man was not created from woman, but woman from man. **9.** Nor was man created for woman's sake, but woman was created for man's sake.²¹⁹

The Excessive Inculcation of Eve

Instead of softening the blemish against Eve in the OT, the Christian followers of the New Testament have taken it as foundation of their faith. St. Paul and his followers moved heaven and earth to stigmatize Eve more and more with passage of time. They utilized all fertility of their minds to

²¹⁵ F. R. Tennant, *The Sources of the Doctrines of The Fall and Original Sin*, p. 117 (footnote).

²¹⁶ 1 Ti 2:14 KJV.

²¹⁷ Timothy tells us nothing how marriage of widows turns them away from Christ. What was their earlier promise with the Christ that they had broken?

²¹⁸ 1 Ti 5:11-12, 15 GNB.

²¹⁹ 1 Co 11:3, 8-9 GNB.

magnify the sin in her. A summery of their accusations is given below:

Eve mistrusted God's word and so the woman sinned by unbelief.²²⁰

By giving forbidden fruit to Adam, she was also guilty of the sin of bad example, or *scandal*. She knew perfectly well that she had done wrong; and so tried to throw the blame on the serpent: "the serpent deceived me, and I ate." What a vain excuse!²²¹

Some of the expositors have lent their own imagination to describe the state of the mind of Eve. According to them eve must have thought that:

I will accept God's punishment because I am strong enough to endure it? Thus did Satan stir up pride in the woman's heart. She was determined to become like God by her own powers, and independently of God's help. She was ready to disobey God's commandment, no matter what the cost. Poor foolish Eve!²²²

This is how the descendants of Eve have prosecuted her to prove her guilt for maximum punishment from the Lord.

Story of Fall Promotes Misogyny

Relying on literal interpretation of Genesis Ch. 3, the People of Book continue to insist on the wickedness of the feminine gender. They propagate women introducing various vices and sinfulness in the world. Lot's wife and his daughters were depicted as prominent sinners among the women.²²³ Rape of Dinah,²²⁴ Seduction of Judah by Tamar,²²⁵ Joseph and Potiphar's wife, Seduction of Boaz by Ruth²²⁶ all such instances point fingers on the depravity of women. The entire chapter 23 of Ezekiel is devoted to the description of moral corruption of Aholah and Aholibah, as the most lustful prostitutes. Allegedly, the **sovereign LORD married them both and they also bore children to Him**. Although it had been clarified that Aholah and

²²⁰ *The Creed Explained* p. 200.

²²¹ *The Creed Explained*, p. 201.

²²² *The Creed Explained*, p. 201.

²²³ Gen 19:26, 19:30-38.

²²⁴ Gen, 34:1-2.

²²⁵ Gen, 38:12-19.

²²⁶ Ruth Ch. 3.

Aholibah represented Samaria and Jerusalem respectively yet we cannot connive at the insolence of the composer of Ezekiel to ascribe such dirty type of pornography to the so-called spouses of the Almighty. **No worse blasphemy has ever been ascribed to the holiest of the holies in the universe.**

Instead of the blasphemy of establishing conjugal relationship between the most transcendent holiness of the Almighty and the prostitutes, the composer could have refrained from any aspersion against the glory and dignity of God. The metaphorical description of God's marrying the prostitutes cannot also be reconciled with His commandments in the following:

A priest shall not marry a woman who has been a prostitute or a woman who is not a virgin or who is divorced; **he is holy**. The people must consider the priest holy, because he presents the food offerings to me. I am the LORD; I am holy and I make my people holy.²²⁷

A similar prohibition to the High Priest has been repeated in the following:

not a widow or a divorced woman or a woman who has been a prostitute. He shall marry only a virgin from his own clan. Otherwise, his children, who ought to be holy, will be ritually unclean. I am the LORD and I have set him apart as the High Priest."²²⁸

From the verses of the Leviticus quoted above, it transpires that holiness of women is confined only to virgins belonging to the Israelites. All other virgins or married women in the world have been declared unholy or unclean. Instead of being the commandment of the Lord, these verses seem to be invention of the Levites themselves. The restriction had never existed from Adam up to Joseph son of Jacob. Instead of the revelation from the Lord or word of Moses these verses seem to be self-service of the Levites to exalt themselves over all other people in the world. It is also worth noting here that the priests of Israel had neither been holier than the Almighty nor His prophets. These verses also conflict with the parables involving the Almighty to marry two prostitutes and having children from them

²²⁷ Lev 21:7-8 GNB.

²²⁸ Lev 21:14-15 GNB.

(Eze Ch. 23). There is no mention of God's being unholy due to this union nor about uncleanness of the children. Similarly, Hosea marrying a woman who was unfaithful to him and subsequently his marrying a prostitute under instructions from the Lord is incompatible with verses Lev 21:7-8, 14-15. It has been recorded that:

When the LORD first spoke to Israel through Hosea, he said to Hosea, "Go and get married; your wife will be unfaithful, and your children will be just like her. In the same way my people have left me and become unfaithful." So Hosea married a woman named Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim. (...) ²²⁹

The LORD said to me, "Go again and show your love for a woman who is committing adultery with a lover. You must love her just as I still love the people of Israel, even though they turn to other gods and like to take offerings of raisins to idols." ²³⁰

The misogynistic trend and pornography of different writers is explicit from the words ascribed to Solomon praising his beloved:

You, my love, excite men as a mare excites the stallions of Pharaoh's chariots. ²³¹

The overall trend of Old Testament to denigrate the feminine gender as a whole is also evident from the following:

How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman? ²³²

14. What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? 15. Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight. ²³³

1. Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. **2.** He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. **3.** And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee? **4. Who can bring a clean thing out of**

²²⁹ Hos 1:2-3 GNB.

²³⁰ Hos, 3:1 GNB.

²³¹ Son 1:9.

²³² Job 25:4 (KJV).

²³³ Job, 15:14-15 (KJV). If this verse had really been uttered by Job, he too was unclean and unrighteous. The Christians too must form a new opinion about Jesus Christ born of marry who was a woman.

an unclean? not one.²³⁴

Since all human beings except Adam are born of woman, therefore, the assertions in the book of Job as quoted above stigmatize all human beings including the most exalted prophets of the LORD from Noah to Jesus. Believers in the holiness and virtuosity of the prophets, therefore, take strong exception to such a baseless slander. The matter of victimizing and deprecating women in the OT does not end there. Certain other examples also allege wickedness to them:

26. I found something more bitter than death---the woman who is like a trap. The love she offers you will catch you like a net, and her arms around you will hold you like a chain. A man who pleases God can get away, but she will catch the sinner. **27.** Yes, said the Philosopher, I found this out little by little while I was looking for answers. **28.** I have looked for other answers but have found none. **I found one man in a thousand that I could respect, but not one woman.**²³⁵

An excerpt from Zechariah also adds to the disdain for women:

6. "What is it?" I asked. He replied, "It is a basket, and it stands for the sin of the whole land." **7.** The basket had a lid made of lead. As I watched, the lid was raised, and there in the basket sat **a woman! 8. The angel said, "This represents wickedness."** Then he pushed her down into the basket and put the lid back down.²³⁶

Eve the Main Target of Degradation

The first chapter of Elaine Morgan's book *The Descent of Woman* is titled 'The Man Made Myth'. These are the opening paragraphs of the chapter:

According to the Book of Genesis, God first created man. Woman was not only an afterthought, but an amenity. For close on two thousand years this Holy Scripture was believed **to justify her subordination and explain her inferiority;** for even as a copy she was not a very good copy. There were differences. She was not one of His best efforts.

²³⁴ Job, 14:1-4 (KJV). Since the Jews as well as the Christians consider women as unclean, therefore, they themselves must also be unclean.

²³⁵ Ecc 7:26-28 GNB.

²³⁶ Zec 5:6-8 (GNB).

There is a line in an old folk song that runs: '**I called my donkey a horse gone wonky.**' Throughout most of the literature dealing with the differences between the sexes there runs a subtle underlying assumption that **woman is a man gone wonky**; that woman is a distorted version of the original blueprint; that they are the norm, and we are the deviation.²³⁷

The Story of Creation in the Genesis ended in Gen 2:4. The alternate story starts from Gen 2:5. It tells us that:

And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.²³⁸

It had been further asserted that:

15. And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. **16.** And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, **Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it:** for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.²³⁹

The event referred to above pertains to the period when the man (Adam) was all alone. **The LORD had not yet created Eve.** She, therefore, was neither the direct addressee of the commandment prohibiting the man to eat from the tree of knowledge nor was she a direct participant in Adam's treaty with the LORD. The prohibition, as such, was binding Adam directly and Eve indirectly. It is, therefore, unjust to absolve Adam to isolate Eve for the condemnation.

Substitution of Cause, Punishment and Victims

As regards the cunningness of the serpent, the same is evident from the fact that instead of Adam he chose to seduce Eve. Consequently, Eve not only ate from the forbidden tree but also gave some to Adam. **We, queerly note here that in spite of the transgression by Adam and Eve, the LORD did not fulfill His threat of killing them on the same day** (Gen 2:17). There was an obvious substitution of the culprits, the cause of punishment and the tenor of infliction on them. Instead of inflicting death on

²³⁷ Elaine Morgan, *The Descent of Woman*, (London: Souvenir Press Ltd. 1972), p. 7.

²³⁸ Gen 2:8 KJV.

²³⁹ Gen 2:15-17 KJV.

the transgressors, they were transferred from the Garden to live on Earth for about a thousand years thereafter. A different type of Punishment was pronounced for the serpent and also for the woman as detailed in Gen 3:14-16. As regards Adam, the LORD said to him:

And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: **cursed is the ground for thy sake**; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.²⁴⁰

The obvious discrepancies in the narrative of fall show that it hardly has any strand of revelation in it. It, however, abounds in mythology, misconceptions, inconsistencies and injustice which create problems for the readers. The myth makes us believe that God was not the fountainhead of life and the knowledge of good and bad. According to Genesis 2:9, the knowledge and life-everlasting grew on trees in the Garden. Obviously, the Gods had no control on the trees nor could they prevent man from approaching the same. Being helpless in the matter, they had no recourse than turning Adam and Eve out of the Garden lest they may also eat from the tree of life to live forever.

The Genesis provides us with no cause to spare Adam and Eve from the punishment suggested in Gen. 2:16-17. There seems to be no rationality in cursing the ground on behalf of Adam. Instead of the major offence, the charge sheet contains an extra clause i.e. '**because thou hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, cursed is the ground for thy sake.**' It was obviously unjust to curse the innocent on the part of the culprits. There is no explanation for the relaxation of punishment for Eve. Keeping in view all this, the judgment ascribed to the LORD cannot be upheld as good, sound or sensible. The Assertion about the ground that "Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field" has no truth in it. It controverts the reality that the Earth is the most ideally

²⁴⁰ Gen, 3:17-19 KJV.

located planet in the universe. Besides a congenial atmosphere for plants, different types of food and life on earth, it is bounteously blessed with provisions necessary to sustain and evolve human beings in different atmospheres on earth. Existence of all types of grains, fruits, flesh of the birds, fish and animals are, therefore, enough to invalidate the curse quoted above.

The story of transgression of Adam and Eve in the Garden had no implication of the depravity or degeneration of our first parents. **There had been no mention of sinfulness as the cause of expulsion.** The removal of man from the garden had neither been caused due to sinfulness or degeneration in the nature of man. It was rather due to man's elevation to a higher realm that the Gods stood scared of him lest he may also eat from the tree of life to live for ever:

And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.²⁴¹

According to the Genesis, Gods in fact were compelled to turn out Adam and Eve from the Garden only to forestall their audacity to eat from the tree of life to live forever. The so-called expulsion of our first parents was, therefore, prompted by man's elevation to a higher realm i.e. attainment of likeness with Gods. **It, as such, is incorrect to interpret man's placement on earth as his fall.**

Eve had been blamed to be the first transgressor of the divine commandment. Allegedly, she not only ate from the forbidden tree herself (Gen 3:1-6) but also incited Adam to eat from it. Taking the transgression as the only cause or source of human sinfulness, the Jews as well as the Christian conclude that from the woman began the sins.

²⁴¹ Gen, 3:22-24 KJV.

Culpability of Woman

In spite of high sounding assertions of the west about the equality of rights, social status and liberty, we find that there is age long history full of condemnation for women both in the Bible and the literature of the West.

Later Jewish tradition and Pauline Christianity sought to apportion the blame for the loss of immortality between three protagonists: the Devil, Adam and Eve. The male chauvinist author of Genesis and the similarly inspired Jewish sage of the early second century BC, Jesus ben Sira, pointed the finger at Eve; she was the first to taste the forbidden fruit and enticed Adam to do the same. **"From a woman sin had its beginning and because of her we all die,"** Lamented ben Sira two centuries before Jesus (Ecclus 24:25).²⁴²

According to the Qur'an, Adam admitted his fault plainly. He did not blame the woman or the Lord for giving the woman to be with him (Gen 3:12). He also did not try to accuse God for allowing Satan direct access to them. Since primary responsibility to obey the commandment of the Lord and to implement the same lay on Adam, therefore, he hastened to confess his guilt. The Lord, too, was kind enough to absolve him of the blame without even making any reference to Eve (Al-Qur'an, 20:115). Consequently, both Adam and Eve implored the Lord for deliverance from the calamity. Their humility to confess the guilt with earnest assurance to do good in future made them eligible for appointment as vice-gerent of the Lord on Earth. Had they annoyed the Almighty with insolent reasoning or arrogant response to the show cause like Satan, they would have proved their unfitness to serve as vice-gerent of the Lord. Humility, confession of guilt, seeking mercy and forgiveness from the Lord were, therefore, the attributes to qualify humankind for their appointment as deputies of the Lord on Earth.

²⁴² GEZA VERMES, *The Resurrection* p. 4-5.

THE QUR'AN AND THE STORY OF FALL

Adam (Man)

According to Islam, the Almighty is eternal being having neither beginning nor an end. We know nothing about the time when the Almighty created the sky which was in the shape of an infinitely large mass of gaseous substance. The Almighty revealed that:

ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ
فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْأَرْضِ ائْتِيَا طَوْعًا أَوْ
كَرْهًا قَالَتَا أَتَيْنَا طَائِعِينَ

Moreover He comprehended in His design the sky, and it had been (as) smoke: He said to it and to the earth: "Come ye together, willingly or unwillingly." They said: "We do come (together), in willing obedience."²⁴³

Even the modern research of the astrophysicists arrived at the same conclusion that in the beginning there was a huge gaseous substance which exploded about 13.7 billion years ago. Billions or perhaps trillions of heavenly bodies created by the explosion started expanding throughout the universe. The scientists name this incident as **Big Bang** and they take this event as the beginning of the time. The event had been revealed by the Qur'an more than 1300 years before its discovery by the astrophysicists. The Qur'an had revealed that:

أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّ
السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقًا
فَفَتَقْنَاهُمَا وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ
شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ أَفَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ (٣٠)

30. Do not the unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together (as one unit of creation), before we clove them asunder? We made from water every Living thing. Will

²⁴³ *Al-Qur'an* 41:11; Eng. tr. Yusuf Ali.

They not then believe?²⁴⁴

Although it has nowhere been specifically mentioned in the Qur'an yet the scholars believe that the Almighty had created the angels even before the Big Bang. Angels had, therefore, been worshipping the Lord since their creation without any lapse on their part. Similarly, all other heavenly bodies had been obeying the commandments of the Lord flawlessly. This was so because all the creatures including the angels were subjected to the compulsion by the Lord and they enjoyed no freedom to swerve even to the slightest extent from the command given to them.

Perhaps billions of years after them, the Almighty was pleased to create two new species i.e. Jinn and Man who enjoyed freedom to decide and to act. Instead of inbuilt guidance in them, the Almighty had been sending His prophets to preach faith and to guide them on the straight path towards the Lord. Our Earth had separated from the sun about 4.5 billion years ago. At the time of its separation from the sun, it was hot like sun. This was perhaps the period when the Almighty created the Jinn from the flame of fire and placed them on the earth. Jinn, however, possessed a rebellious nature and miserably failed to carry out the commandments of the Lord. Eventually, when the earth cooled down to its present condition, the Almighty decided to create man (Adam) with the predestination to install him as vicegerent of the Lord on earth. For further details, please consult chapters titled '*Creation as Per Qur'an*', and '*Six Periods of Creation*', in our book '*Original Sin and Salvation*' Part I titled '*God and the Universe*'.

The Jinn too had been created for the purpose of test and trial on earth. Iblis, a chief among the jinn, had long record of faithful service and worship of the Lord due to which he enjoyed the privilege to worship the Lord in the company of the Angels. The overwhelming majority of Jinn, however, miserably failed to worship and to abide by the commandments of the Lord. By the time the earth had cooled down to produce vegetables and trees, the Almighty decided to create man (Adam) for the purpose of placing him as His vicegerent on earth. The new species had been created from the essence of the clay of the earth and it

²⁴⁴ *Al-Qur'an*, 21:30; Eng. tr. Yusuf Ali.

differed substantially in its attributes from the angels and the Jinn. Humankind had been created in a different fashion only to fulfill the requirements of their test and trial on earth. The Lord, therefore, pronounced that:

30) Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: "I will create a vicegerent on earth." They said: "Wilt Thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood?- whilst we do celebrate Thy praises and glorify Thy holy (name)?" He said: "I know what ye know not."²⁴⁵

Two things are evident from the verse quoted above.

1. That humankind was created with the sole purpose of their test and trial in the capacity of vicegerent of the Lord on earth. **His stay in the Garden was, therefore, transitory and preparatory to take up his predestined assignment.** As such, it is futile to lament on the so called human fall from the Garden or to blame anyone for the same.

2. The creator knew full well about the nature and potentials of the new creature. Even the angels and Iblis were fully aware of the weaknesses of Adam and his propensities towards sin.

The placement as vicegerent of the Lord on Earth was such a distinguished assignment that even angels envied the preference of Adam over them. It was, therefore, to know the reason for human preference over the angels that they had supplicated to the Lord as we find in verse 2:30 quoted above. Their curiosity was, therefore, satisfied by demonstrating superior knowledge of Adam about all the things on earth and all that he was required to deal with. To demonstrate the peculiarities of Adam, the Lord manifested the same in the following manner:

31. And He taught Adam the nature of all things; then He placed them before the angels, and said: "Tell me the nature of these if ye are right." **32.** They said: "Glory to thee, of knowledge we have none, save what Thou hast taught us: In truth it is Thou who art perfect In knowledge and wisdom." **33.** He said: "O Adam! Tell them their natures." when He had told them, Allah said: "Did I not Tell you that I know the secrets of heaven and earth, and I know what ye reveal and

²⁴⁵ *Al-Qur'an*, 2:30 (Yusuf Ali).

what ye conceal?"

Adam in fact was the Vicegerent of the Lord who exalted him as His first prophets on earth. The Lord, therefore, made all the heavenly bodies and other forces subservient to the cause of man (Al-Qur'an 22:65, 31:20). In addition to the above, He also ordered the angels to bow in respect of Adam the vicegerent of the Lord on earth. Man is unique as bearer of the covenant of the Lord before whom he made angels prostrate and everything in the worlds was subjected to his control.

Man was created as a mortal, hence, death was the end of his life on earth. He had been created by the Lord with balanced inclinations towards good or bad. The Lord provided man with proper guidance to differentiate between the vice or virtue. The creator undoubtedly had perfect foreknowledge about the future conduct of Adam and his descendants. God said:

1. Blessed be He in Whose hands is Dominion; and He over all things hath Power;- **2. He Who created Death and Life, that He may try which of you is best in deed:** and He is the Exalted in Might, Oft-Forgiving;- (Al-Qur'an 67:1-2).

It is evident from the above that the Lord had created death and life to test and try the conduct of human beings on earth. After the death and resurrection on the Day of Judgment, they will have to account for their deeds.

God's reply and the demonstration of better knowledge of Adam and his compatibility with the environments and requirements on earth were enough to satisfy the angels on the matter. They also had no power to disobey the commandments of the Lord as quoted below:

34. and Behold, we said to the angels: "Bow down to Adam" and They bowed down. not so Iblis: He refused and was haughty: He was of those who reject Faith.

Since Iblees being a Jinn enjoyed the liberty to choose and to act independently in accordance with his own choice, therefore, he chose to be rebellious against orders of the Almighty. Refusal of Iblis (Satan) has been discussed in Qur'an at several places out of which we reproduce a few verses as under:

61. Behold! we said to the angels: "Bow down unto Adam": They bowed down except Iblis: He said, "Shall I bow down to one whom Thou Didst create from clay?" **62.** He said: "Seest

Thou? This is the one whom Thou hast honoured above me! if Thou wilt but respite me to the Day of Judgment, I will surely bring His descendants under My sway - all but a few!"²⁴⁶

This shows that besides Satan's pride of creation from the flame of fire, he was also extremely jealous about man. He, therefore, challenged the Lord that he will prove the inferiority of Adam due to his sinfulness on earth. For this, he sought respite up to the Day of Judgment so that he may continue misguiding the humankind from the straight path towards the Almighty.

Not only this, Satan also put a blame on the Almighty for misguiding him and disclosed his intention to dissuade human beings from devoted worship of the Lord as revealed in the following:

16. He said: "**Because Thou hast thrown me out of the way,** Lo! I will lie In wait for them on Thy straight way: **17.** "Then will I assault them from before them and behind them, from their right and their left: nor wilt Thou find, In Most of them, gratitude (for Thy mercies)." **18.** ((Allah)) said: "Get out from this, disgraced and expelled. If any of them follow thee,- Hell will I fill with you all.

The animosity and challenge of Satan was perhaps the background due to which the Almighty in his supreme wisdom decided to give an initial training to Adam and Eve before installing them on their proper assignment. It has, therefore, been revealed that:

35. We said: "O Adam! dwell Thou and Thy wife In the Garden; and eat of the bountiful things therein As (where and when) ye will; but approach not This tree, or ye run into harm and transgression." **36.** Then did Satan make them slip from the (garden), and get them out of the state (of felicity) In which They had been. We said: "Get ye down, all (ye people), with enmity between yourselves. On earth will be your dwelling-place and your means of livelihood - for a time." **37.** Then learnt Adam from His Lord words of inspiration, and His Lord turned towards him; for He is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful."²⁴⁷

At another place in the Qur'an, the Almighty warned Adam about the animosity and vicissitude of Satan:

²⁴⁶ *Al-Qur'an*, 17:61-62 (Yusuf Ali).

²⁴⁷ *Al-Qur'an*, 2:35-37 (Yusuf Ali).

Then We said: "O Adam! verily, this is an enemy to thee and thy wife: so let him not get you both out of the Garden, so that thou art landed in misery."²⁴⁸

It is evident from the above that during the probationary period in the Garden, both Adam and Eve had forgotten the warning of the Lord to beware of the vicissitudes of Satan who succeeded to misguide them by resorting to lies on oath.²⁴⁹ Being enticed by Satan, both Adam and Eve ate from the forbidden tree which was a serious transgression against the commandment of the Almighty. When given a show cause to explain reasons for the transgression, both Adam and Eve admitted their fault and surrendered before the Lord unconditionally in the hope of mercy and forgiveness from Him. The Lord, therefore, revealed to Adam the words of inspiration to seek forgiveness from Him. The Lord revealed words were:

قَالَ رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا وَإِنْ لَمْ
تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ
الْخَاسِرِينَ

23. They said: "Our Lord! we have wronged Our own souls: if Thou forgive us not and bestow not upon us Thy Mercy, we shall certainly be lost."

The above words of God revealed to Adam, remain universal, unfailing and everlasting guidance for seeking forgiveness, mercy and salvation from the Lord. Whosoever repents sincerely and earnestly to seek forgiveness of Allah, is not only forgiven the sin but he also receives additional grace and blessings from the Lord.

On their repeated supplication with the words quoted above, the Almighty turned to them gracefully and forgave their sin as quoted in verse 2:37 above. **This verse, therefore, is the universal panacea to seek forgiveness as suggested by the Almighty himself.** All sinners must, therefore, turn to the Lord repentantly with a firm resolve not to repeat the sin and seek forgiveness for the sins already committed by them. Those who follow the directions of the Lord are surely to be saved from any

²⁴⁸ *Al-Qur'an*, 20:17 (Yusuf Ali).

²⁴⁹ *Al-Qur'an*, 7:21.

wrongs done by them. Almighty Allah, therefore, directed Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to declare:

53. Say: "O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah: for Allah forgives all sins: for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. **54.** "Turn ye to our Lord (in repentance) and bow to His (Will), before the Penalty comes on you: after that ye shall not be helped."²⁵⁰

After forgiving Adam and Eve, the Almighty ordered them and Satan to get down to the earth.

38. we said: "Get ye down all from here; and if, As is sure, there comes to you guidance from me, whosoever follows My guidance, on them shall be no fear, nor shall They grieve. **39.** "But those who reject Faith and belie Our Signs, They shall be companions of the fire; They shall abide therein." **40.** O Children of Israel! call to mind the (special) favour which I bestowed upon you, and fulfill your Covenant with me As I fulfill My Covenant with you, and fear none but Me. **41.** and believe In what I reveal, confirming the Revelation which is with you, and be not the first to reject Faith therein, nor sell My Signs for a small price; and fear me, and me alone. **42.** and cover not truth with falsehood, nor conceal the truth when ye know (what it is)."²⁵¹

The Lord as such had commanded the children of Israel to remember the special favors of the Almighty and especially the covenant the Lord had made with them. They were also advised that all that is revealed by the Almighty in future that confirms the revelations already made to you must be obeyed by you and you must not cover truth with falsehood nor conceal anything when you already know it.

Alas the Israelites being stiff-necked people did not always obey the prophets of the Lord including John the Baptist, Jesus Christ and Muhammad the promised messenger of Allah.

The Lord had also told the Israelites that although Satan will be attacking and encircling all ordinary people on earth yet he will have no power over the devout servants of the Lord. God said:

"As for My servants, no authority shalt thou have over them:"

²⁵⁰ *Al-Qur'an*, 39:53-54 (Yusuf Ali).

²⁵¹ *Al-Qur'an*, 2:38-42 (Yusuf Ali).

Enough is thy Lord for a Disposer of affairs.²⁵²

The verses quoted above are enough to show that Satan had developed jealousy against man. It was for this cause that the Almighty had disclosed to Adam that:

117) Then We said: "**O Adam! verily, this is an enemy to thee and thy wife:** so let him not get you both out of the Garden, so that thou art landed in misery."²⁵³

It has not been revealed how long Adam and Eve stayed in the Garden. Anyhow, it is supposed that they stayed there for a fairly long time. Adam had no previous knowledge and experience of the temptations of Satan. He knew nothing about his lies and deception in guise of a sincere advisor. Due to forgetfulness in the nature of their creation, Adam and Eve had forgotten the warning of God about Satan. So both Adam and Eve innocently fell prey to the vicissitudes of Satan and ate from the forbidden fruit. The transgression resulted into the appearance of their nakedness to them and they instantly realized their fault and earnestly started beseeching forgiveness from Allah. Both of them repented earnestly to seek mercy of the Lord. The Lord has revealed that:

120. But Satan whispered evil to him: **he said, "O Adam! shall I lead thee to the Tree of Eternity and to a kingdom that never decays?"** **121.** In the result, they both ate of the tree, and so their nakedness appeared to them: they began to sew together, for their covering, leaves from the Garden: **thus did Adam disobey his Lord,** and allow himself to be seduced.²⁵⁴

It is evident from the above that Satan had whispered to Adam than to Eve. **As such, the Jewish as well as Christian blemish on Eve being the target of Satan has no foundation at all.**

The Lord also reveals the lapse of Adam in the following words:

وَلَقَدْ عَهِدْنَا إِلَىٰ آدَمَ مِنْ قَبْلُ
فَنَسِيَ وَلَمْ نَجِدْ لَهُ عَزْمًا

115. We had already, beforehand, **taken the Covenant of Adam, but He forgot:** and we found on His part no firm

²⁵² *Al-Qur'an*, 17:65 (Yusuf Ali).

²⁵³ *Al-Qur'an*, 20:117 (Yusuf Ali).

²⁵⁴ *Al-Qur'an*, 20:120-121 (Yusuf Ali).

resolve.

Most of the verses of the Qur'an pertaining to the fall of Adam, therefore, attribute mistake to Adam than to Eve. It, therefore, seems that some misogynistic saints or scribes of the OT had intentionally perverted the true words of the Lord to throw entire blame on Eve which is a criminal act on their part. Women throughout the world must, therefore, note the correct position as revealed by the Almighty and not be misled by the false propaganda of the Jews and the Christians about debasement of the female sex.

These verses further show that forgetfulness had been a peculiarity of humankind. It was, therefore, due to the nature of his creation that Adam forgot the warning of the Lord. The transgression made by him was, therefore, due to mistake than any intention to disobey the Almighty. Prophet Adam realized and confessed his guilt immediately, and without any hesitation he humbly surrendered himself unconditionally to the mercy of Allah, which was not only granted to him but also he was exalted to a higher position. God tells us:

122) But his Lord chose him (for His Grace): He turned to him, and gave him Guidance.²⁵⁵

It may be noted that Adam was not chosen as a prophet up to his stay in the garden but subsequent to his confession of guilt and seeking mercy and forgiveness of Allah, he was not only forgiven his fault but was also exalted to the position of God's first prophet on Earth. From the above story, we draw following conclusions:

1. That Adam was created solely with the predetermined purpose of making him vicegerent on earth. He was created from the essence of clay to conform closely to the environments of Earth. His nature of creation, knowledge of good and bad, discretion to choose between the two, freedom of action were all pre-requisites for fulfillment of his assignment as inheritor of earth.

2. **Adam's stay in the Garden was provisional and probationary during which Almighty Allah had to**

²⁵⁵ *Al-Qur'an*, 20:122 (Yusuf Ali).

impart necessary training to him. In the garden, Adam and Eve received practical demonstration about Satan's snare to detract the human begins from the straight path. They also knew how fatal could be the outcome of the violation of the commandment of the Lord. During this period Adam also learnt that one must immediately submit himself humbly before the Lord to seek His mercy and pardon in case of any intentional or unintentional transgression from the commandments of the Lord. There is nothing else that could save humankind from utter destruction in the hereafter.

3. That man is not like angels who cannot fall into sin. Man's nature and his involvements are such that he should always remains on his guards. There are numerous temptations inviting man to his immediate attractions, and man can always lean towards them forgetting, ignoring or violating the guidance of Allah. No one is absolutely immune from such attractions, but God fearing and faithful bondmen of Allah are saved by His grace. Others fall prey to the delusions of Satan. Anyhow, man is free to act according to his own choice. As long as he is God-conscious and keeps in mind commands of Allah, Satan cannot overpower him to commit sin. Satan whispers his temptations to man, and man following his own immediate benefits is seduced into sin.

4. That man was neither created in the likeness of God nor did he resemble him. A creature from clay can neither resemble God nor can be immortal. God says:

فَاطِرُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ
مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَمِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ
أَزْوَاجًا يَذْرَؤُكُمْ فِيهِ لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ
شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

11) (He is) the Creator of the heavens and the earth: He has made for you pairs from among yourselves, and pairs among cattle: by this means does He multiply you: **there is nothing whatever like unto Him**, and He is the One that hears and sees (all things).²⁵⁶

²⁵⁶ *Al-Qur'an*, 42:11 (Yusuf Ali).

Translation of certain other verses of the Qur'an may also be useful to understand the theme:

(6) O MAN! What is it that lures thee away from thy bountiful Sustainer, (7) Who has created thee, and **formed thee in accordance with what thou art meant to be**, and shaped thy nature in just proportions, (8) **Having put thee together in whatever form He willed [thee to have]**? (9) Nay, [O men,] but you [are lured away from God whenever you are tempted to] give the lie to [God's] Judgment!²⁵⁷

The statement of Bible that 'God created human beings making them to be like Himself' cannot, therefore, be upheld. Adam was created a mortal from the very beginning with balanced propensities towards vice or virtue peculiar to the nature of man. Man could never be immune from sin, but if he followed the divine guidance he would always lean towards virtuous life. **The Christian theory that sin and death entered the world due to original sin of one man (Rom. 5:12) is, therefore, baseless and does not find any support from Old Testament or the Qur'an.** They blame Adam that 'on account of the sin of Adam (we?) his descendants come into the world deprived of sanctifying grace which we ought to have according to Gods original plan to be holy and just in His sight' (*Creed Explained*, p. 215). No revelation of God supports the said concept.

We on the other hand believe that man did not and could not thwart original plan of God. The accusation is entirely unfounded. Factually, Adam instead of depriving us of the sanctifying grace, was instrumental to bring prophet-hood, blessings and grace with him which has been passing on to his descendents from Seth, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad ﷺ. We know that God is the only competent authority to forgive the sin. He graciously forgave Adam his lapse in the Garden even before his placement on earth, but the Bible says 'Because of what you (Adam) have done the ground will be under a curse,' and the same shall produce thorns and thistles. This curse of Bible is not only misplaced but also the same is against the established facts. Out of billions of stars and planets in the universe, only the earth has the ideal situation,

²⁵⁷ *Al-Qur'an*, 82:6-9 (Yusuf Ali).

potentials and environments for life and vegetation on earth. Qur'an is full of narratives regarding bountiful blessings of Allah on earth. Even then if one considers earth under a curse, as Bible makes us believe, then how will they categorize billions of stars and planets burning hot with gasses and smoke? Had the earth been the only cursed planet, it was unsuitable for the abode of all the prophets including Jesus whom the Christians worship as their God. Let us rethink! Have we not unnecessarily magnified the sin of Adam to find false refuge behind the so-called original sin? St. Paul and his followers formula of magnifying sin of Adam is, therefore, their own opinion neither revealed by the Lord nor believed by any other nation in the world.

The fact is that God has always been providing us the guidance to do good, and in case we fall into sin we must not stick to it obstinately; nor should we aspire to lay the burden of our sin on Jesus Christ i.e. the newly introduced gods of the Christians. The right way as advised by all the prophets including John the Baptist and Jesus himself was to repent of our sins with a firm resolve not to repeat the same. Repentance and praying earnestly for the forgiveness of the Almighty is the only divinely guided principle for salvation. Here is the ever lasting guidance from the Lord:

114) And establish regular prayers at the two ends of the day and at the approaches of the night: **For those things, that are good remove those that are evil:** Be that the word of remembrance to those who remember (their Lord):²⁵⁸

"O ye Children of Adam! Let not Satan seduce you, in the same manner as He got your parents out of the Garden, stripping them of their raiment, to expose their shame: for he and his tribe watch you from a position where ye cannot see them: We made the evil ones friends (only) to those without faith." (Al-Qur'an, 7:27)

"O ye Children of Adam! whenever there come to you messengers from amongst you, rehearsing My signs unto you,- those who are righteous and mend (their lives),- on them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve." (Al-Qur'an, 7:35)

"Did I not enjoin on you, O ye Children of Adam, that ye should not worship Satan; for that he was to you an enemy avowed?- (Al-Qur'an, 36:60)

²⁵⁸ *Al-Qur'an*, 11:114 (Yusuf Ali).

Allah has made specific mention of Adam as his chosen one and a highly exalted prophet of the Lord:-

"Allah did choose Adam and Noah, the family of Abraham, and the family of 'Imran above all people" (Al-Qur'an 3:33)

Allah also said:

"Those were some of the prophets on whom Allah did bestow His Grace,- of the posterity of Adam, and of those who We carried (in the Ark) with Noah, and of the posterity of Abraham and Israel of those whom We guided and chose. Whenever the Signs of (Allah) Most Gracious were rehearsed to them, they would fall down in prostrate adoration and in tears. (Al-Qur'an, 19:58)

We, therefore, note that unlike the Christian theologians, the Qur'an does not make Adam the culprit or the accused one for bringing sin or death on man.

It is only the Qur'an which has acknowledged dignified partnership of women with men without any blemish on them. Even in the case of Adam and Eve, the Qur'an does not accuse 'the woman' being beguiled by the snake to mislead Adam. Similarly, there is no reference about any enmity between the serpent and the seed of woman²⁵⁹ which the Christian identify as Christ. According to the Qur'an, it was Adam rather than Eve who was seduced by Satan due to which both Adam and Eve were deluded to commit the sin. The myths of the tree of knowledge, serpent or seed of woman, therefore, seem to be an invention of some sages of the Israelites.

According to the Qur'an, Adam admitted his fault plainly. He did not blame the woman or the Lord for giving the woman to be with him (Gen 3:12). He also shifted no responsibility to God for allowing Satan direct access to them. Since primary responsibility to obey the commandment of the Lord and to implement the same lay on Adam, therefore, he confessed his guilt plainly. The Lord, too, was kind enough to absolve him of the blame without even making any reference to Eve.

We had already, beforehand, taken the covenant of Adam, but

²⁵⁹ Gen 3:14-15.

he forgot: and We found on his part no firm resolve.²⁶⁰

The Qur'an also reveals that on refusal of Iblees to bow before Adam, the LORD had warned him that:

Then We said: "O Adam! verily, this is an enemy to thee and thy wife: so let him not get you both out of the Garden, so that thou art landed in misery."²⁶¹

According to the Genesis, Serpent, instead of Iblees seduced Eve to eat from the forbidden tree (Gen 3:1-4). Eve took some of the fruit, ate it and gave some to her husband i.e. Adam.²⁶²

Qur'an Places No Specific Blame on Eve

In our book titled '*Original Sin and Salvation*', we have discussed the purpose of the creation of man to serve as vicegerent of the Lord on Earth. Since Qur'an is the final and the immutable testament of the Lord which can never be spoiled by the human hand, therefore, it is the only source to reveal the true purpose of human creation and their duties on earth to achieve salvation in the Hereafter.

As regards Adam and Eve, the Lord God did not put any specific blame exclusively on Eve. Qur'an, in fact, says "then did Satan make them slip from the (Garden) and get them out of the state (of felicity) in which they had been." No doubt, Adam and Eve did commit the transgression but the Lord knew full well that their trespass was neither intentional nor preplanned. It was Satan who seduced them to slip from the Garden. Consequently, the Lord called unto them "Did I not forbid you that tree, and tell you that Satan was an avowed enemy unto you?" (Al-Qur'an, 7:22). Adam and Eve had no excuse except confessing their guilt and craving for the mercy of the Lord in the words: "Our Lord! We have wronged our own souls: If thou forgive us not and bestow not upon us Thy Mercy, we shall certainly be lost" (Al-Qur'an, 7:23). The humility, the plain confession, and craving for mercy and forgiveness from the Lord pleased the Almighty to such an extent that besides forgiving the inequity, He found him fit to serve as his representative on earth. As additional blessings on Adam the Lord chose him

²⁶⁰ Al-Qur'an, 20:115 (Yusuf Ali).

²⁶¹ Al-Qur'an, 20:117 (Yusuf Ali).

²⁶² Gen 3:6.

to the exalted position of his first messenger and prophet on earth. Mankind, therefore, is the only species among other creatures of the Lord who makes humble confession of their fault before the Lord with the firm faith that only He can save them from the distress caused by their own misdeeds. Hence, their confession with meekness and entreaty before the Lord for His mercy and remission of sin attracts special compassion of the Lord due to which God-fearing men are raised in ranks even beyond many of the angels of the Lord.

Man Not Envisaged to Be Sinless

Let's not forget that the Lord God had subjected all his creation to compulsion before the creation of man and jinn. All heavenly bodies, Angels and other creatures of the Lord were serving Him under strict compulsion enjoying no power to deviate from the commandments of the Lord. God had already created billions and billions of angels who were ceaselessly glorifying and worshiping the Lord. As such, if sinlessness had been the prerequisite for the vice-gerent of the Lord, there was no dearth of angels to take up the assignment. Alternatively, the Lord could have created man in the likeness of the angels without any power to commit a sin. The Almighty also enjoyed absolute sway over human beings to keep them abide by true guidance from Him if He so willed. God says:

"If We had so willed, We could certainly have brought every soul its true guidance: but the Word from Me will come true, "I will fill Hell with Jinns and men all together." (Al-Qur'an 32:13)

This shows that the Lord had intentionally created human beings with such attributes that they enjoyed freedom to choose between the good or bad and act freely in accordance with their own choice. Those who feared the Lord and avoided transgression of His commandments deserve to be rewarded by admission into the Paradise. Others among Jinn and Men will be the fuel of the Hell as quoted above. As such, man's fate was to be wrought with his own hands. God, therefore, provided adequate guidance to man but did not enforce compulsion or restraint on his action. (Al-Qur'an 6:149, 16:9, 6:35, 6:107, 10:99 etc.)

God's Mercy Exceeds His Wrath

We know that the angels cannot commit any sin. They, therefore, need not seek mercy from the Lord to forgive them. It is man who has been created with balanced inclinations towards vice or virtue. Among men are those who immediately realize their fault and turn to the Lord and seek his mercy with utmost humility on their part. They seek protection of the Lord against Satan. Such a craving of man is perhaps the specific distinction of man compared with other creatures who cannot commit sin. It is only man or jinn who can wrong their souls by disobeying the commandments of the Lord. All good souls turn to the Lord repentantly as soon as they realize their transgression and pray to the Lord earnestly to rescue them from the distress caused by the evil suggestions of Satan. **It has the lesson that sinfulness cannot be fatal for man as long as he does not loose his hope in the mercy of the Lord and continues to crave for the same.** Sinfulness is in the nature of man and absolute immunity from sin is not desired of him. In case man becomes immune from sin, he will not be a man but an angel of the Lord unable to fulfill the purpose of the test and trial of the Lord. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, therefore, said that if mankind seized sinning God would eliminate them and replace them with other creatures who would continue to sin and repent to seek mercy and forgiveness from the Lord with utmost humility on their part.

The Sahih Muslim in its chapter on "THE OBLITERATION OF SINS WITH THE HELP OF SEEKING FORGIVENESS FROM ALLAH" has reported sayings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ from three different sources. One out of the same is quoted below:

"Abu Ayyub Ansari reported that Allah's Messenger said: If you were not to commit sins, Allah would have swept you out of existence and would have replaced you by another people who have committed sin, and then asked forgiveness from Allah, and He would have granted them pardon".²⁶³

The interested readers may also consult Hadith number 6620 and 6622 of the chapter quoted above.

²⁶³ *Sahih Muslim*, Book 37, Chapter 2, Hadith Number 6621.

Let us not forget that the Angels represent a creature without free will. As against them, man enjoys the liberty to choose between the good or bad and to act in accordance with his decision. In this respect it will be useful to quote here a passage from Jaffrey Lang's book 'Even Angels Ask' (Published by Suhail academy Lahore Pakistan).

"Virtues are abstract concepts and difficult to define, but I believe that we can agree that to grow in virtue at least three things are needed: Free will, or the ability to choose; intellect, so that one is able to weigh the consequences of his or her choices and learn from them; and third, and equally important, suffering and hardship. As we saw, the Qur'an emphasizes strongly all three of these while discussing man's spiritual evolution. To grow in compassion, for example, is inconceivable without suffering. It also requires choice, the ability to choose to reach out to someone in need or to ignore him. Intellect is necessary so that one can estimate how much for oneself will be invested in showing compassion to the sufferer. Similarly, to be truthful involves a choice not to lie and is heightened when telling the truth may lead to personal loss and suffering, which can be predicted through the use of one's reason." (p 51)

The Christian doctrine of God's estrangement from man, due to the sin of Adam, finds no support from the Old Testament or the Qur'an. God always loved Adam and his descendants and had been kind enough to provide continuing guidance to them through His prophets sent to each and every community in the world. The Lord, therefore, revealed to Prophet Muhammad صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم that:

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولًا أَنْ
اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ
فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ حَقَّتْ
عَلَيْهِ الضَّلَالَةُ فَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ
فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
الْمُكْذِبِينَ (٣٦)

36. for we Assuredly sent amongst every people an apostle, (with the Command), Serve Allah, and eschew Evil: of the people were some whom Allah guided, and some on whom

Error became inevitably (established). so travel through the earth, and see what was the end of those who denied (the truth).²⁶⁴

Here is another revelation endorsing the subject quoted above:

“Verily We have sent thee in truth, as a bearer of glad tidings, and as a warner: and **there never was a people, without a warner** having lived among them (in the past).²⁶⁵

God’s love is also evident from the fact that at many places in the Qur’an, the Lord had been kind enough to address mankind by calling them *يا بني آدم*, i.e. ‘O Ye Children of Adam.’ It shows that the Lord always had a great love and concern for Adam and his progeny, due to which he always continued to guide them to the proper path.

²⁶⁴ Al-Qur'an, 16:36 (Yusuf Ali).

²⁶⁵ Al-Qur'an 35:24.

MONASTICISM

The term monasticism has been taken from Greek 'monachos' derived from Manos meaning 'alone'. It is a religious way of life in which one renounces worldly pursuits to devote oneself fully to spiritual work. Although it is an important feature of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church, yet it has substantially different forms than monasticism in Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism. Other religions such as Islam or Zoroastrianism criticize and disapprove monasticism, in spite of the fact that the traces of monasticism also exist among them. The earliest existence of monasticism is found in Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism respectively. It has been recorded that:

All Jains, whether Digambaras or Svetambaras, maintain that in the monastic life, the nun is inferior to the monk, a view by the way, shared by all great religions. **"They (nuns) are prohibited to study Chapters of Mahaparijnana and Arunopopata and Drashtivada."**²⁶⁶ It is stated that the Drashtivada deals with magical formulae and as women are not strong enough but fickle, they are not allowed to study the above mentioned scripture. The climax is reached in the rule which lays down that a monk of three years' standing can become a teacher of a nun of thirty years' standing"²⁶⁷

The Buddhists call some of their saints as Bhikkhus (beggar) in Pali language or Bhikshu in Sanskrit. Monks, therefore, played a central part in Buddhism. Unlike the Christian priests and the pontiffs, these people had been living with minimum of possessions and almost with no shelter at all. They lived an austere life for the sake of salvation. They usually rejected worldly goods and lived in extreme poverty. Such people, therefore, hated to become increasingly rich and influential on the basis of religion and

²⁶⁶ This shows that both Buddhism and Jainism had debarred women from study of the holy books. As against this, Islam has made it mandatory for men as well as women not only to study the scriptures but to gain other knowledge also that can be useful for them. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Seeking knowledge is compulsory (fard) on every Muslim Man and Woman." *Sahih Ibn Maja*, Hadith No. 224.

²⁶⁷ *Woman's Plight*, 275 quoted from *Indian Women Through the Ages*: (Bombay: Asia Publishing House 1964), p. 105.

charity of others as we find in the Christian priests and the pontiffs.

Although Elijah and Elisha had been inspiring examples of godly hermits in Judaism yet, they were acknowledged as prophets than the hermits. Later on the Essenes lived a well regulated monastic life. John the Baptist was perhaps the only prophet who lived among the Essenes and was brought up under their influence. These people were strict followers of the Law of Moses though living in separation from the Pharisees who were inclined to apparent formalities of law and the Sadducees who obeyed the Roman authorities, their law and preferred the Roman culture than sticking to the faith of Moses:

Monasticism as we find in Christianity is not mentioned in the scriptures. St. Paul of Thebes (c. 227-342) is commonly regarded as the first Christian Hermit. He had gone to the Egyptian desert in around 250 AD during the persecution of Decius and Valerianus and spent almost a century there. It is worth noting here that although there might have been some other Christians leaning towards monasticism but we have no record of the same. Anthony (252-356) the Egyptian born in Koma in central Egypt is considered as the founder of Christian monasticism. Impressed with Christ's words to the rich young man, he gave up his possessions, and from about 270 AD took up the ascetic life in his native village. Some fifteen years later he went into the solitude, becoming a hermit.²⁶⁸ St. Anthony the Great met with Paul in around 342 for a day or so and picked up certain additional principles of monasticism from him. Subsequently, St. Basil the Great (329-379) founded monasteries in Cappadocia in modern day Turkey. There had been many other Christian saints to follow the system adopted by the afore-mentioned Christian fathers. Prominent among them was St. Benedict of Nursia (480-543/7) who is regarded as the father of the Western monasticism.

Condemnation of Women and Sex

Mr. Lecky points out about **an injurious consequence resulting from asceticism**. It depreciates extremely the

²⁶⁸ *A History of the Christian Church* by Williston Walker, 3rd Ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970), p. 124.

character and the position of women. A woman was regarded as the origin of human ills. The Jewish writers declared that **“the badness of men is better than the goodness of women”**. Lecky also observes that:

The combined influence of the Jewish writings, and of that ascetic feeling which treated women as the chief source of temptation to man, was shown in those fierce invectives against this sex, which form so conspicuous and so grotesque a portion of the writings of the Fathers, and which contrast so curiously with the adulation bestowed upon particular members of the sex. **Woman was represented as the door of hell, as the mother of all human ills.** She should be ashamed at the very thought that she is a woman.²⁶⁹ She should live in continual penance, on account of the curses she has brought upon the world. She should be ashamed of her dress, for it is the memorial of her fall. She should be especially ashamed of her beauty, for it is the most potent instrument of the daemon. (...) **Women were even forbidden by a provincial Council, in the sixth century, on account of their impurity, to receive the Eucharist into their naked hands.** Their essentially subordinate position was continually maintained.²⁷⁰

All these thoughts led to increase the hatred of sex.

No prophet including John the Baptist and Jesus Christ prohibited marriage of men and women. There also had been no legislation to ban the priestly marriages in the OT or the New Testament. It was, however, under the influence of the writings of the Christian saints like Paul, Timothy, Titus, Tertullian, Justin Martyr, Tatian, Origen, Augustine and Athanagoras and other Christian fathers that avoidance of sex was preached even within the married life. The pagan philosophers saw sexual intercourse as a carnal corruption. Greco-Roman world followed their philosophers like Pythagoras, Plato, Plotinus and the stoics due to which the Christians also developed the concept of hatred for the body and its requirements to exalt the spirit. Consequently many among the Christians after the 4th century AD started avoiding marriage to be chaster than the laity. In actual

²⁶⁹ If it is shameful to be a woman, they had no choice of their own.

Should we then inflict the suggested shame on the creator?

²⁷⁰ Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, pp. 357-358.

practice, however, most of them indulged into sexual crimes a few of which have also been recorded in this book.

God in fact had made no mistake to create human beings with such special attributes that kept them attached to the material world than to the spiritual sphere. They were obliged to spend most of their times to earn their living to provide shelter for themselves and to work hard for fulfillment of all their requirements on earth. This was perhaps the reason that the Almighty did not command them to devote their entire time to prayer and praise of the Lord. Only a few hours during a day were enough to fulfill their mandatory services to the Almighty. During all other times, they were free to look after the worldly affairs and to contribute to the welfare of the community. They, however, had to surrender themselves to the will of the Lord while making efforts for their necessities and accumulation of provisions for themselves. Their test and trial on earth, therefore, had to be conducted during their full involvement in material matters not forgetting their obligations towards the Almighty. Human beings had various choices before them while they were obliged to act in accordance with the guidance from the Lord. Their test and trial on earth, therefore, included their efforts to fulfill their material needs and also to spare sufficient time to worship the Lord as per guidance provided by Him. God said:

Every soul shall have a taste of death: and We test you by evil and by good by way of trial, to Us must ye return.²⁷¹

As such, those who flee from their responsibilities of an ordinary life on earth do not fulfill the purpose of their creation. Instead of living in accordance with the commandments of the Lord, the celibates and the monks avoid the duties prescribed by the Almighty and try to fight against the nature of creation. Human beings were obliged to channelize their efforts to fulfill their necessities such as food water, shelter and sex in accordance with the divine guidance besides performing the mandatory duties for worship of the Lord. Ignoring the worldly part of their assignments, some of the priests or the sages among them started living on alms from the others. Failing to control

²⁷¹ Al-Qur'an 21:35 Yusuf Ali.

their passions, a few of them tried to mutilate themselves by castration or other inflictions on their bodies. The Lord had not enjoin on them seclusion, abstemiousness, dirtiness nor mortification of their bodies for exaltation of their spirits. They forget that their efforts are to be evaluated under the conditions the Lord had provided them. As such their efforts to fulfill their natural requirements such as efforts to earn their living, rest, sleep, eating, drinking, sex and everything else is counted towards worship enjoined by the Almighty provided they do not violate the law of the Lord. Human beings must always remember the word of God that *"It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him"* (Gen 2:18). Since the Almighty dislikes that a man should be alone, therefore, all the prophets of the Lord had been marrying women and having sex with them for procreation of children. Those who avoid the ordination of the Lord go astray from Him. Lord did not prohibit them to live a married life and to procreate, therefore, celibacy, monasticism, avoidance of lawful sex has no merit before Him. Humankind should, therefore, enjoy all the gifts granted and allowed by the Lord and be grateful to Him. Those who deny these gifts and do not pay thanks to the Almighty, are counted among the infidels. God said:

And remember! your Lord caused to be declared (publicly): "If ye are grateful, I will add more (favours) unto you; But if ye show ingratitude, truly My punishment is terrible indeed."²⁷²

We bestowed (in the past) Wisdom on Luqman: "Show (thy) gratitude to Allah." Any who is (so) grateful does so to the profit of his own soul: but if any is ungrateful, verily Allah is free of all wants, Worthy of all praise.²⁷³

It is, therefore, evident from the above that to abstain from the bounties and gifts of the Lord are among the arrogant refusers of the gifts of Lord. The Lord also said:

31. O Children of Adam! wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer: eat and drink: but waste not by excess, for Allah loveth not the wasters. **32.** say: **who hath forbidden the beautiful (gifts) of Allah, which He hath produced for His servants, and the things, clean and**

²⁷² Al-Qur'an 14:7 Yusuf Ali.

²⁷³ Al-Qur'an 31:12 Yusuf Ali.

pure, (which He hath provided) for sustenance? say:

They are, In the life of This world, for those who believe, (and) purely for them on the Day of Judgment. Thus do we explain the Signs In detail for those who understand.

Human efforts to avoid bounties of the Lord by deserting the world cannot be counted among good deeds. By doing so, they avoid the responsibilities imposed by the Lord which can be termed as a foul play against the purpose of their creation.

All lawful efforts of human beings are considered worship of the Lord along with prayers and other means of worship enjoined by Him. This was so because the LORD had commanded human beings to live in accordance with the Divine guidance provided to them through the prophets for a successful life on Earth. It is, therefore, up to human beings to decide whether it is more beneficial for them to follow the Divine Guidance or to act upon the suggestions made by the human beings without any commandment of the Lord.

Keeping in view the Divine Guidance, human life on Earth is just like a stay in the test hall where they have to fulfill the obligations of the test. Being fully aware of the human nature, the LORD did not enjoin on them anything conflicting with human potentials and their needs. The LORD did not command them to abstain from food, clothes, shelter or sex etc. as per His law. He did not order them to kill their natural instincts or to subject one's body to unbearable pains or fatigue.

The Creator was fully aware of the human nature and their needs on Earth. He, therefore, provided adequate guidance to them to gratify all their natural requirements in the manner prescribed by Him. He also made certain prohibitions so that human beings may not transgress His commandments. In case they try to act against the nature of their creation or make an attempt to destroy their body through self-imposed thirst or hunger or by killing their natural instincts, they will not be fulfilling the purpose of their creation. God has, therefore, enjoined on human beings to live a balanced life imitating His prophets. Whole time worship of the Lord ignoring all human needs has nowhere been enjoined by the Almighty.

Narrated 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin Al-'As: Allah's Apostle said to

me, "O 'Abdullah! Have I not been informed that you fast during the day and offer prayers all the night." 'Abdullah replied, "Yes, O Allah's Apostle!" The Prophet said, "Don't do that; **fast for few days and then give it up for few days, offer prayers and also sleep at night, as your body has a right on you, and your wife has a right on you, and your guest has a right on you.** And it is sufficient for you to fast three days in a month, as the reward of a good deed is multiplied ten times, so it will be like fasting throughout the year." I insisted (on fasting) and so I was given a hard instruction. I said, "O Allah's Apostle! I have power." The Prophet said, "**Fast like the fasting of the Prophet David and do not fast more than that.**" I said, "How was the fasting of the Prophet of Allah, David?" He said, "Half of the year," (i.e. he used to fast on every alternate day).

Afterwards when 'Abdullah became old, he used to say, "It would have been better for me if I had accepted the permission of the Prophet (which he gave me i.e. to fast only three days a month)."²⁷⁴

Monkery and Celibacy Disallowed by Islam

"Monkery is against nature. Still it had been or is being practiced by many a religion prevalent on the face of this globe. Islam disapproves monastic life of any sort."²⁷⁵

Referring to the primitive church, the Christian fathers observe that:

The most striking contrast between the Mosaic Dispensation and the Law of Christ is the materialism of the one and the pure spiritualism of the other.²⁷⁶

Such people forget the basic principle that people during all ages had been advised to follow their prophets. As such anyone among the Israelites going beyond the religious traditions set by prophets from Adam to Moses cannot be counted as Israelites. Similarly, the Christians advancing beyond the traditions and preachings of Jesus Christ, cannot claim themselves to be the true followers of Jesus Christ. As regards the prophets, they have been living a natural life abiding by the revelations of the Lord. The

²⁷⁴ *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Volume 3, Book 31, Hadith Number 196

²⁷⁵ *Woman's Plight*, p. 101.

²⁷⁶ Henry C. Lea, *Sacerdotal Celibacy in the Christian Church*, (Philadelphia 1867 & London 1907), p. 21.

prophets did not add anything new in the messages of the Lord nor did they omit anything from it. The same was their message to their followers e.g. Moses said to the Israelites that:

Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.²⁷⁷

The Jews as well as the Christians know that Moses had been living like an ordinary man. He did not adopt pure spiritualism himself nor preached for the same to anyone of his followers. Man has been created with the amalgamation of the body and the spirit. There can be no existence of man in the absence of the body or the spirit. The Lord had decided to test and try humankind in the nature he had created them. As such, those who are talking of pure spiritualism of Christianity as against the so called materialism of Moses are diminishing human body without any commandment from the Lord. Those who ignore the material aspect of their lives as guided by the Lord are fighting against the nature on which the Lord had created them. Any evasion from the responsibilities as human beings, therefore, defeats the purpose of their creation. The teachings of the Christian fathers to kill or destroy human bodies and instincts to elevate the spiritual existence have no possibility at all. Human beings can exist only as long as there is union of the body and the spirit. Severing the one from the other, leads only to death.

Although Islam did not explicitly prohibit celibacy or Monkenry yet it did clarify that *Ruhbanyyah* i.e. celibacy or asceticism had not been enjoined by the Almighty. Some people had themselves invented it (perhaps to earn more pleasure of the Lord) but they miserably failed in the same. God said:

وَرَهْبَانِيَّةً ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنَاهَا
عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ فَمَا
رَعَوْهَا حَقَّ رِعَايَتِهَا

The Monasticism which they invented for themselves, We did not prescribe for them: (We commanded) only the seeking for

²⁷⁷ Deu 4:2 KJV.

the Good Pleasure of Allah; but that they did not foster as they should have done.²⁷⁸

Humankind, therefore, is obliged to fulfill all duties as human beings. They need to struggle for earning their own livings and the requirements for their families. They must also make efforts to obtain shelter, water, protection against heat or cold, to secure themselves from dangerous animals and diseases. Their worship of the Lord, therefore, contains all these and many other obligations on earth. The Lord did not enjoin devoting their entire time to worship Him. Marriage in a lawful manner and procreation of children is also mandatory on human males and females and to avoid the same is a violation of the commandment of the Lord. In this respect, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

وعن أنس قال : قال رسول الله صلى
الله عليه وسلم : " إذا تزوج
العبد فقد استكمل نصف الدين
فليتق الله في النصف الباقي "

It has been narrated on the authority of Anas that the Prophet said, "When a person gets married, he has perfected half of Deen; and he should fear Allah in the other half".²⁷⁹

Voluntary and Involuntary Celibates

In addition to the first commandment of the Lord in the Bible (Gen 1:27-28), there was the commandment that "*It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him*" (Gen 2:18). In the Qur'an, the Lord reminds human beings of His sign (blessing) that:

And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, **that ye may dwell in tranquillity with them**, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are Signs for those who reflect.²⁸⁰

Since the Lord had created males and females so that they may dwell in tranquillity, therefore, those who avoid

²⁷⁸ Al-Qur'an 57:27 Yusuf Ali.

²⁷⁹ Tabrezi, *Mishkat al-Masabeeh*, *Kitab-al-Nikah*, Chapter 3, Maktab Mishkat al-Islamiyyah.

²⁸⁰ Al-Qur'an 30:21 Yusuf Ali.

marriage are violating the commandment of the Almighty. This is a clear-denial of the gift of God. Such people arrogantly refuse to obey the first commandment of the Lord in the Bible. Besides this, they also violate the guidance of the Lord in the Qur'an:

Marry those among you who are single, or the virtuous ones among yourselves, male or female: if they are in poverty, Allah will give them means out of His grace: for Allah encompasseth all, and he knoweth all things.²⁸¹

Allama Asad's comments elaborate the true sense of the Ayah quoted above. He writes:

42 i.e. from among the free members of the community, as is evident from the subsequent juxtaposition with slaves. (As most of the classical commentators point out, this is not an injunction but a recommendation to the community as a whole: hence my interpolation of the words "you ought to".) The term Ayyim – of which Ayama is the plural – **signifies a person of either sex who has no spouse, irrespective of whether he or she has never been married or is divorced or widowed.** Thus, the above verse expresses the idea – reiterated in many authentic sayings of the Prophet – that, from both the ethical and the social points of view, **the married state is infinitely preferable to celibacy.**²⁸²

Mr. W. R. Greg²⁸³ observed that:

The women who are mostly redundant, the 'involuntary celibates' in England, are chiefly to be found in the upper and educated sections of society. Among the agricultural and manufacturing population, who earn their daily bread by daily labour, comparatively few women remain long or permanently single. It is those immediately and those far above them who have a position to maintain and appearances to keep up, who are too proud to sink, too sensitive to contrive, too refined or too delicate to toil, or too spoiled to purchase love at the expense of luxury — that chiefly recruit the ranks of the old maids.²⁸⁴

Writing about different sources of celibacy, he observes that:

²⁸¹ Al-Qur'an, 24:32 Yusuf Ali.

²⁸² Allama Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur'an*, (Gibraltar: Darul-Andalus, 1980), Commentary of *Surah 24*, Verse 32. footnote no. 42, p. 539.

²⁸³ An English essayist (1809 –1881).

²⁸⁴ William Rathbone Greg, *Literary and Social Judgments*, 4th edition, (London: Trubner & Co., Ludgate Hill, 1877), Vol. II p. 63.

Connected with this part of the subject we must enumerate one more fruitful source of female celibacy - *domestic service*. The number of women servants in Great Britain, nearly all of whom are necessarily single, is astonishing. In 1851 **it reached 905,165, and must now reach at least a million**. Of these 905,165, 582,261 were twenty years of age and upwards. This is a social phenomenon in all civilized countries, though probably nowhere on so great a scale as with us; it would appear to be a permanent and a necessary one; and probably in its essence and within due limits is not to be found fault with or deplored. **That there are some evils connected with it is indisputable. No doubt many of these girls are exposed to considerable hardships. More probably are exposed to great temptations.**²⁸⁵

There is no doubt that in the modern times we find some more or less well educated women spending their youth in different services such as teaching, nursing or governesses. They live hand to mouth to keep up with the latest fashions, refined tastes and better standard of living. While living an unnatural and incomplete life, they pay little attention to marry during their youth or to lay by sufficient means to secure their future. In the end, they are **doomed to return to a lonely and destitute old age of celibacy**.

The position of many bachelors is no different from that described above. Mr. W. R. Greg, therefore, writes that:

Quite as many men—probably far more—share these sentiments, form the same estimates, and come to the same conclusions. They are loth to resign the easy independence, the exceptional luxuries, **the habitual indulgences of a bachelor's career**, for the fetters of a wife, the burden and responsibility of children, and the decent monotony of the domestic hearth. They dread family ties more than they yearn for family joys.²⁸⁶

Yet there is also another reason for celibacy of women.

So many women are single because so many men are profligate.²⁸⁷ Probably, among all the sources of the social

²⁸⁵ William Rathbone Greg, p. 72.

²⁸⁶ William Rathbone Greg, p. 67.

²⁸⁷ 'Profligate' means licentious or recklessly extravagant person. It also means depraved immoral or a libertine. *Out of Shadows* was a project report about *Violence Against Women in Scotland*. An instance of the 'profligate' can be found in the interview of women conducted by the project:

anomaly in question, this, if fully analyzed, would be found to be the most fertile, and to lie the deepest. The case lies in a nut-shell. Few men — incalculably few — are truly celibate by nature or by choice. There are few who would not purchase love, or the indulgences which are its coarse equivalents, by the surrender or the curtailment of nearly all other luxuries and fancies, if they could obtain them on no cheaper terms. In a word, few — comparatively very few — would not marry as soon as they could maintain a wife in anything like decency or comfort, if only through marriage they could satisfy their cravings and gratify their passions. If their sole choice lay between entire chastity, — a celibacy as strict and absolute as that of women, — or obedience to the natural dictates of the senses and the heart in the only legitimate mode, the decision of nine out of ten of those who now remain bachelors during the whole or a great portion of their lives would, there can be no doubt, be in favour of marriage. If, therefore, every man among the middle and higher ranks were compelled to lead a life of stainless abstinence till he married, and unless he married, we may be perfectly sure that every woman in those ranks would have so many offers such earnest and such rationally eligible ones, that no one would remain single except those to whom nature dictated celibacy as a vocation, or those whose cold hearts, independent tempers, or indulgent selfishness, made them select it as a preferable and more luxurious career. Unhappily, as matters are managed now, thousands of men find it perfectly feasible to combine all the freedom, luxury, and self-indulgence of a bachelor's career with the pleasures of female society and the enjoyments they seek for there. As long as this is so, so long, we fear, a vast proportion of the best women in the educated classes — women especially who have no dowry beyond their goodness and their beauty — will be doomed to remain involuntarily single.²⁸⁸

Describing the position of unmarried women in 1869 Mr. W.R. Greg writes that:

To speak in round numbers, we have one million and a half adult unmarried women in Great Britain.²⁸⁹

"I had no rights in that relationship. He would go out and buy new suits, but we didn't have any money for food. Once, myself and the children lived for a week on potatoes literally nothing else – but he just didn't seem to care. He would take the money I earned, and then go out with different women. But at least when he was out I felt safe." *Out of the Shadows*. By Lesley Orr Macdonald, p. 15-16.

²⁸⁸ William Rathbone Greg, p. 75.

²⁸⁹ William Rathbone Greg, Vol. II p. 88.

Disapproval of Asceticism for Married Christians

It was a wise step on the part of certain Christian leaders to ordain that:

Married persons should not enter into an ascetic life, except by mutual consent. The ascetic ideal, however, remained unchanged. To abstain from marriage, **or in marriage to abstain from a perfect union**, was regarded as a proof of sanctity, and marriage was viewed in its coarsest and most degraded form. The notion of its impurity took many forms, and exercised for some centuries an extremely wide influence over the church. Thus, it was the custom during the middle ages to abstain from the marriage bed during the night after ceremony, in honour of the sacrament.²⁹⁰ **It was expressly enjoined that no married person should participate in any of the great Church festivals,²⁹¹ if the night before they had lain together²⁹²** and St. Gregory the Great tells of a young wife who was possessed by a daemon, because she had taken part in a procession of St. Sebastian, without fulfilling this condition. The extent to which the feeling on the subject was carried is shown by the famous vision of Alberic in the twelfth century, in which a special place of torture, consisting of a lake of mingled lead, pitch, and resin is

²⁹⁰ It is strange, however, to note that in spite of calling marriage as a sacrament they prohibited consummation of marriage on the first night. The Jews as well as the Christians can quote no commandment of the Lord to refrain from sex on the first night of the marriage.

²⁹¹ In this respect the Christians had perhaps followed the Leviticus as quoted below:

The woman also with whom man shall lie with seed of copulation, they shall both bathe themselves in water, and be unclean until the even. (Lev 15:18 KJV)

Firstly it may be noted that the Leviticus seems to be the Jewish priests and the scribes. The words quoted above can be taken as the writing of some misogynistic writer than the revelation from the lord. There is no record in the religious writings to prove that some married prophet of the Lord had abstained from going to the temple to perform religious ceremonies and rituals on the ground that he had sex with his wife in the previous night. Factually, the wife as well as husband get ritually clean after sex as soon as they take a bath.

²⁹² Islam has abolished any such prohibition. The marriage sacrament and lying together with one's wife has no profanity at all. Simply they have to do is to take a bath to attain cleanliness.

represented as **existing in hell for the punishment of married people who had lain together on Church festivals or fast days.**²⁹³

Firstly we need to point out that sex between a wife and husband is a virtuous deed than a sin as presumed by many of the Christian saints. The sexual act, however, makes husband as well as wife ritually impure (unclean) only temporarily till they take a bath. About this the Almighty had commanded that:

And if you are in the state of ritual impurity, purify yourselves (by taking a bath).²⁹⁴

The tradition of the Holy Prophet ﷺ quoted below is the practical example of the implementation of the Law of the Lord in this respect:

Narrated Abu Hurayrah: Once iqama was pronounced and the people had straightened the rows, Allah's Apostle went forward (to lead the prayer) but he was Junub²⁹⁵, so he said, "Remain in your places." And he went out, took a bath and returned with water trickling from his head. Then he led the prayer.²⁹⁶

It is worth noting here that in Judaism and Christianity fasting time was from evening to evening i.e. about 23-24 hours a day. Islam gave a relaxation in the same. Lying together with women on religious festivals has no prohibition in Islam. As regards fasting, relaxation has been granted both in the time of fasting and to have sex during the night hours as detailed below:

Permitted to you, on the night of the fasts, is the approach to your wives. They are your garments and ye are their garments. Allah knoweth what ye used to do secretly among yourselves; but He turned to you and forgave you; so now associate with them, and seek what Allah Hath ordained for you, and eat and drink, until the white thread of dawn appear

²⁹³ Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, pp. 333. We have already clarified that the Law is conveyed only through direct revelations in words to prophets of the Lord. After the prophet no one has the right to amend any law. Visions or sayings of sages and saints cannot overrule the word or tradition of a prophet nor can they change an iota from the revelation of the Almighty. Those who follow visions instead of the revelations are manifestly in the wrong.

²⁹⁴ Al-Qur'an 5:6 Maududi.

²⁹⁵ *Junub* means ritual impurity. caused by sex with one of the wives of the Prophet ﷺ.

²⁹⁶ *Sahih Bukhari*, Volume 1, Book 11, Number 613.

to you distinct from its black thread; then complete your fast Till the night appears; but do not associate with your wives while ye are in retreat in the mosques. Those are Limits (set by) Allah: Approach not nigh there to. Thus doth Allah make clear His Signs to men: that they may learn self-restraint.²⁹⁷

Rigidity in Faith

Mr. Lecky, refers to unfaltering belief of certain Christians and their rigidity against others to such an extent which has no parallel in other fields. He writes:

Many men and most women, though completely ignorant of the very rudiments of biblical criticism, historical research, or scientific discoveries, though they have never read a single page, or understood a single proposition of the writings of those whom they condemn, and have absolutely no rational knowledge either of the arguments by which their faith is defended, or of those by which it has been impugned, will nevertheless adjudicate with the utmost confidence upon every polemical question, denounce, hate, pity, or pray for the conversion of all who dissent from what they have been taught, assume, as a matter beyond the faintest possibility of doubt, that the opinions they have received without enquiry must be true, and that the opinions which others have arrived at by enquiry must be false, and make it a main object of their lives to assail what they call heresy in every way in their power, except by examining the grounds on which it rests. It is probable that the great majority of voices that swell the clamour against every book which is regarded as heretical, are the voices of those who would deem it criminal even to open that book, or to enter into any real, searching, and impartial investigation of the subject to which it relates. **Innumerable pulpits support this tone of thought, and represent, with a fervid rhetoric well fitted to excite the nerves and imaginations of women, the deplorable condition of all who deviate from a certain type of opinions or of emotions; a blind propagandism or a secret wretchedness penetrates into countless households, poisoning the peace of families, chilling the mutual confidence of husband and wife, adding immeasurably to the difficulties which every searcher into truth has to encounter, and diffusing far and wide intellectual timidity, disingenuousness, and hypocrisy.**²⁹⁸

²⁹⁷ Al-Qur'an 2:187 Yusuf Ali.

²⁹⁸ Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, pp. 376-377.

CELIBACY

Celibacy

Celibacy connotes the single state adopted for religious motives. It is, therefore, associated with renunciation of marriage and sex besides all worldly pursuits to earn one's livings or to make any material contribution for the welfare of the society. It has been said that:

"Jainism had much in common with Buddhism, it rejected the sanctity of the Vedas, the superiority of the Brahmins, and the sacramental notions of marriage, and considered all sex relations, in or out of wedlock, as inferior to celibacy"²⁹⁹

The Judaica has recorded about celibacy that:

The deliberate renunciation of marriage is all but completely alien to Judaism. Scarcely any references to celibates are to be found in the Bible or in the Talmud, and no medieval rabbi is known to have lived as a celibate (...). The demands of celibacy were included neither among the acts of self-denial imposed upon the Nazirite (Num. 6:1–21), nor among the special restrictions incumbent upon the priesthood (Lev. 21:1–15). Celibacy among Jews was a strictly sectarian practice; Josephus ascribes it to some of the *Essenes (Wars 2:120–21). Equally exceptional is the one solitary case of the Talmudist Simeon ben *Azzai who explained his celibacy with the words: "My soul is fond of the Law; the world will be perpetuated by others" (Yev. 63b).

The norm of Jewish law, thought, and life is represented rather by the opening clause in the matrimonial code of the Shulḥan Arukh: **"Every man is obliged to marry in order to fulfill the duty of procreation, and whoever is not engaged in propagating the race is as if he shed blood, diminishing the Divine image and causing His Presence to depart from Israel"** (Sh. Ar., EH 1:1). The law even provides for the courts to compel a man to marry if he is still single after passing the age of 20 (ibid., 1:3). Since the late Middle Ages, however, such authority has not been exercised (Isserles, ad loc.). Only if a person "cleaves to the study of the Torah like Simeon b. Azzai" can his refusal to marry be

²⁹⁹ *Woman's Plight*, 274–275, quoted from *Indian Women Through the Ages*: (Bombay: Asia Publishing House 1964), p. 102.

condoned, provided he can control his sexual lust (*ibid.* 4).

The Jewish opposition to celibacy is founded first on the positive precept to **"be fruitful and multiply"** as a cardinal duty to perpetuate life, a duty which also underlies the attitude of Judaism toward *birth control. Second, celibacy is incompatible with the Jewish scheme of creation in which a man is regarded as half a human being unless he be married, and in which **"he who is without a wife lives without joy, without blessing,... without peace"** (Yev. 62b, based on Gen. 5:2). Third, far from regarding celibacy as a means to the attainment of holiness, Judaism views it as an impediment to personal sanctification. This is strikingly illustrated by the rabbinic use of the term **Kiddushin ("sanctification") for marriage and by the insistence that the high priest be married** (Lev. 21:13), **especially at the time when he officiates in the Holy of Holies on the holiest day of the year** (Yoma 1:1, based on Lev. 16:6, 11, and 17). **For similar reasons, unmarried people are also debarred from holding certain public and religious offices, notably as judges in capital cases (Sanh. 36b) and as synagogue readers**³⁰⁰ (...). Jewish moralists in all ages have advocated severe self-control and occasionally even a measure of asceticism, but they did not encourage celibacy or any form of monasticism (although exceptionally there was a note of sympathy.³⁰¹

Some scholars, therefore, believe that Celibacy had been inherited by the Christian fathers from the Pagan Idolaters:

The single-mindedness-of-service theme would naturally make the institution of eunuchs attractive to religious organizations, and so we find the tradition of eunuch priests established at the Ephesian temple of Artemis. From there the eunuch priest tradition spread to Rome. This is the background of the Christian involvement with the castration, which is the most drastic form of celibacy.³⁰²

Pope Siricius (c. 380 c.e.) tried to make the clerical celibacy decree of Elvira council. He was the first pope to attempt to establish the idea that hands "fouled" by spousal intercourse were unfit for handling the sacraments. Later he declared that **God accepts worship only when led by sexually**

³⁰⁰ Islam also stresses on marriage of all adults who can afford to do so. For details please refer to our chapter on 'Marriage'.

³⁰¹ *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd Ed., editor in Chief: Fred Skolnik, Vol. 4 (Farmington Hills, Thompson Gale, MI, 2007), s.v. 'Celibacy', p. 537.

³⁰² *Woman's Plight*, p. 273, quoted from Boulding, Elice, *The Underside of History*: 1976, p. 364-365.

abstinent priests.³⁰³ In 386 c.e. Siricius's views on sexual abstinence for priests were reinforced by council of Rome which declared "intercourse is defilement". **And Ambrose of Milan (339-397) demanded that priests not be violated by any intercourse with their wives.**³⁰⁴ Popes and bishops thus tightened the strings of celibacy and an entire caste began to take place.³⁰⁵

Jerome, an early primary source for Bible commentaries, also warrants careful study. He was one of the most virulent champions of the idea that virginity is superior to marriage. Presuming that virginity was a prerequisite to the saintly life, he injected his bias into his translation of the Vulgate (Cf. especially 1 Cor 9:5). Jerome also attacked a monk, Jovinian, who supported marriage for priests.³⁰⁶

Marriage continued to be regarded as something sacred by all the prophets of the Lord and Judaism was no exception to it. Jesus too did not preach celibacy as something superior to the married life of the believers. It was decades after the death of Jesus that the Christian fathers such as St. Paul and others adopted a trend of glorifying celibacy and virginity over the married life. Mathew was perhaps the first Evangelist to follow St. Paul's dictum to acclaim celibacy or living like angels in the heaven. We, therefore, find him ascribing the following words to Jesus Christ. After he had replied a quarry of the Pharisees, he also had to give a reply to the question of his own disciples. According to Mathew, he said:

³⁰³ Pope Siresius had actually committed great violation of the commandments of the Lord about marriage found in the OT and the Qur'an. The Lord never had commanded sexual abstinence to any of his prophets. How the priests could be subjected to more severe injunctions than the holy prophets of the Lord? As against the man-made Christian doctrines, the the Almighty always sanctified the married life to procreate children even during His first covenant with Adam and the 2nd one with Noah (Gen. 1:27-28, 9:1, 7). Please also see Psalms 127:3 and a Hadith of the Holy Prophet ﷺ affirming blessings of the Lord for sex between a husband and his wife.

³⁰⁴ Ambrose had no authority to prohibit the priests from sex with their wives. The prophets or the priests have no where been prohibited from marrying women and having sex with them. According to Islam, women have similar rights on their husbands as the husbands have on them. Wives of the priests will, therefore, be demanding their rights from the priests on the Day of Judgment.

³⁰⁵ *A Brief History of Celibacy*, p. 4.

³⁰⁶ *A Brief History of Celibacy*, p. 4.

For there are different reasons why men cannot marry: some, because they were born that way; others, because men made them that way; and others do not marry for the sake of the Kingdom of heaven. Let him who can accept this teaching do so.³⁰⁷

The words ascribed to Jesus as quoted above contain lot of confusion in the same. He seems to venerate the unmarried life for the sake of the kingdom of heaven which has nowhere been explained either by Jesus or his followers. We, however, hold that marriage of human beings does not debar them from entering the kingdom of heaven. In our opinion, St. Mathew had written his Gospel under the influence of St. Paul who was perhaps the first Christian father to glorify virginity and celibacy over marriage and sex between the lawfully married couples. Some excerpts from 1Corinthians support the view about him:

Now, to deal with the matters you wrote about. A man does well not to marry.³⁰⁸

Actually I would prefer that all of you were as I am;³⁰⁹ but each one has a special gift from God, one person this gift, another one that gift. Now, to the unmarried and to the widows I say that it would be better for you to continue to live alone as I do.³¹⁰

Considering the present distress, I think it is better for a man to stay as he is. Do you have a wife? Then don't try to get rid of her. Are you unmarried? Then don't look for a wife. But if you do marry, you haven't committed a sin; and if an unmarried woman marries, she hasn't committed a sin. But I would rather spare you the everyday troubles that married people will have. What I mean, my friends, is this: there is not much time left, **and from now on married people should live as though they were not married**;³¹¹

³⁰⁷ Mat 19:12 GNB.

³⁰⁸ 1 Co 7:1 GNB.

³⁰⁹ Being a celibate himself, St. Paul arrogantly opposes the verdict of God revealing "*It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him*" (Gen 2:18). His followers especially the celibates must, therefore, rethink whether it is obligatory on them to follow the commandment of the Lord or the preachings of St. Paul and others.

³¹⁰ 1 Co 7:7-8 GNB. St. Paul arrogantly opposes the verdict of God that "*it is not good for man to live alone I will make him an helpmeet for him.*" (Gen 2:18 KJV).

³¹¹ 1Co 7:26-29 GNB. The readers will note that St. Paul was extremely incorrect in his prediction that people may not marry

I would like you to be free from worry. An unmarried man concerns himself with the Lord's work, because he is trying to please the Lord. But a married man concerns himself with worldly matters, because he wants to please his wife; and so he is pulled in two directions. An unmarried woman or a virgin concerns herself with the Lord's work, because she wants to be dedicated both in body and spirit; but a married woman concerns herself with worldly matters, because she wants to please her husband.³¹²

We disagree with the assumption of St. Paul that an unmarried woman or a virgin concerns herself with the Lord's work. The supposition is entirely baseless because hundreds of thousands of virgins or unmarried women become public property while some of them adopt prostitution as a profession for them. There is nothing to ensure that the virgins or unmarried women will always concern themselves with the Lord's work as imagined by St. Paul. He, however, continues to say that:

So the man who marries does well, but the one who doesn't marry does even better. A married woman is not free as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, then she is free to be married to any man she wishes, but only if he is a Christian. She will be happier, however, if she stays as she is. That is my opinion, and I think that I too have God's Spirit.³¹³

The words as quoted above were enough to nullify the blessedness and sanctity of marriage.

Subsequently, the followers of St. Paul emphasized celibacy and abstinence for the three higher grades of the clergy which became effective in the Christian West. In the East, however, the clergy enjoyed freedom to marry at their will. In spite of this, the rule came to prevail that priests might not marry a second time. Besides being at variance with

because there is no time left. This shows that he was expecting the Doomsday within his life or soon thereafter.

³¹² 1Co 7:32-34 GNB. Mr. Paul utterly failed to ponder the wisdom of the Lord to create human beings as males and females. He also ignores the first blessings and the commandment of the Lord to human kind to '*be fruitful and multiply*' (Gen 1:28). If the God intended that human beings must not indulge in worldly matters he would not have created them males and females nor commanded them to be fruitful and do different other duties assigned to them.

³¹³ 1Co 7:38-39 GNB.

the tradition of Abraham, marrying Keturah³¹⁴ after the death of Sarah, the said regulation also had no support from the scriptures. God had never forbidden his people including the priests from marrying women after the death of their earlier wives. Prophet Muhammad's marriage with several women and especially a few of them after the death of his former wives such as Khadijah and Zainab bint Khuzaimah, therefore, reforms the unauthorized ban on marriage of the priests and also their remarriage after the death of the first wife.

As against the elevation of virginity and celibacy by the Christians, Islam induced its followers to marry as soon as they could afford to do so. The Qur'an ordains that:

Marry those among you who are single, or the virtuous ones among yourselves, male or female: if they are in poverty, Allah will give them means out of His grace: for Allah encompasseth all, and he knoweth all things.³¹⁵

If any of you have not the means wherewith to wed free believing women, they may wed believing girls from among those whom your right hands possess: And Allah hath full knowledge about your faith. Ye are one from another: Wed them with the leave of their owners, and give them their dowers, according to what is reasonable: **They should be chaste, not lustful, nor taking paramours:** when they are taken in wedlock, if they fall into shame, their punishment is half that for free women. This (permission) is for those among you who fear sin; but it is better for you that ye practise self-restraint. And Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.³¹⁶

Islam preaches a normal life of struggle and equity. It does not advise human beings to remain aloof from their responsibilities as a member of the society. Celibacy or monasticism has, therefore, been strictly forbidden by Islam. The Prophet ﷺ said:

لا رهبانية في الاسلام

There is no monasticism in Islam.

Although there had been numerous celibates in the world and especially in the Hindus, Buddhists and the Jains yet celibacy was practised mostly by the Christian clergy and

³¹⁴ Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah. (Gen 25:1)

³¹⁵ Al-Qur'an 24:32 (Yusuf Ali).

³¹⁶ Al-Qur'an, 4:25 (Yusuf Ali).

the nuns of the East and West especially w.e.f. the start of the 4th century AD. The early church seemed to follow the personal life of Jesus Christ due to which they preferred to sever all domestic ties for the sake of the kingdom of God. **St. Paul of Tarsus even advised to forego marriage or its use.** In his epistle to the Corinthians, he extolled the **excellence of the virginal or celibate state on the plea that marriage had a tendency to divide interests of man's heart to please his wife which could distract him from serving the LORD wholeheartedly.**³¹⁷

We fail to agree with the credo of St. Paul and his followers that an unmarried woman careth for the things of the LORD. It may be otherwise for different women at different times. While preaching excellence of virginity over the married life, St. Paul diverged from the common traditions of the prophets and the Law in the Old Testament. We can hardly find a prophet abstaining from marriage and children provided he had a settled life with means to support them. Usually, the prophets married at the age of 40 years. As regards John the Baptist and Jesus Christ, they died before reaching the age of 40 years and neither had the means nor a place to settle with their family. Both died at an early age. They, however, did not prohibit marriage to their apostles or followers. As regards St. Paul, he did not have a proper understanding of the purpose of creation of man. Due to special nature of creation of man and multifarious duties to meet his physical requirements, the Almighty had given him the concession to devote the required time to fulfill all his duties on earth. The Lord, therefore, did not demand all time praise and worship from human beings. Women were duty-bound to attend to their husbands, to look after the house and to rear the children in a proper manner. St. Paul, therefore, cannot produce any authority from the scriptures or words of Jesus Christ that men or women may ignore their routine duties in the society and to

³¹⁷ 1Cor 7:32-33. Believers must know that celibacy or virginity was against the commandments of the Lord. It was just presumption of St. Paul that an unmarried woman may always devote herself to the Lord. Human History and experience, however, disproves this assumption. There had been more corruption among the celibates and the so called virgins than among the married people in the world.

flee from their responsibilities imposed on them by the Lord. Perhaps the material needs of humankind have been given priority over service of the Almighty for which they are advised to spare adequate time from their other assignments. Except for the Levites devoted to the temple duties, all other believers were bound to struggle to earn their livings, to look after their families, to help the poor and to perform numerous other duties without forgetting their duties towards the Lord.

St. Paul the so-called apostle towards the gentiles had been a Roman citizen born at Tarsus in the Asia Minor. Being a Jew by birth, he had thoroughly studied Judaism but growing under the Greco-Roman influence, he had developed an inclination towards Greek philosophy, culture and mythology along with their spiritualism and mysticism. He was neither a genuine apostle chosen by Christ nor had he ever a chance to see or hear Jesus preaching to his disciples. Being a Greek he perhaps did not understand even the language spoken by Jesus. Hence instead of preaching authentic teachings of Moses and Jesus Christ, he preached his own convictions in the name of Jesus. His self-claimed apostleship to the gentiles was based merely on his own visions. St. Paul also proudly denied having learnt anything about the life, the person, the events or the teachings of Jesus from any of the genuine disciples or apostles chosen by Jesus (Gal 1:12, 1 Cor 2:10, 1 Cor 11:23, 2 Cor 12:1). Instead of learning anything from the genuine apostles and the disciples of Jesus Christ, St. Paul depends entirely on his own visions. He, therefore, has an assumption of more authority than others because whereas others learnt from Jesus in flesh, he learnt everything from Jesus in spirit which is an exalted position than flesh. St. Paul, therefore, knew nothing from the words revealed by the Lord to Jesus Christ or his preachings to the apostles chosen by him.

Due to his inclinations towards asceticism, St. Paul committed a gross error to think about human beings on the pattern of the spirits or the angels. He perhaps did not concentrate on the point that the Lord had created angels as spirits without any bodies, needs or weaknesses like human beings. Angels are free from hunger, thirst, sex, fatigue or sleep etc. They have no fathers, brothers or children. Angels were free from ailments, passions and

pains. They did not have to struggle for their sustenance nor did they have any fear or dangers from their enemies or the wild animals. The Lord created them in such a fashion that no natural calamities such as floods, fire or typhoons could harm them. There had been numerous other differences in the nature of the creation of human beings as compared to the angels who were created from light whereas human beings were created from the dust of the Earth. Angels belong to the spiritual world while the human beings had been created with amalgamation of physical body (flesh) and spirit. Their existence, therefore, depends both on the body and the spirit. Separation of one from the other obliterates the existence of man.

Many people in the world have failed to understand the purpose of creation of man. God did not create them like angels nor did He command them to behave in the manner of angels. Man created with hundreds of different attributes than the angels has to struggle to fulfill his needs of food, water, shelter, sex and to take on different assignments for upkeep of his wife family and the relatives in accordance with his own circumstances. All these duties if performed through means suggested by the Almighty are counted among worshipping the Lord. The God never commanded the human beings to be celibates or to get aloof from their duties as a man. Mere abstinence from the things made lawful by the Almighty cannot be counted as a piety or worship of the Lord. Here is one of the revelations disclosing to the Prophet ﷺ that he must not abstain from the things permitted by the Almighty. God said:

1. O Prophet! why holdest Thou to be forbidden that which Allah has made lawful to thee? Thou seekest to please Thy consorts. but Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

It is evident from the above that marrying women, procreation of children and to attend to various activities to subdue the earth was among the primary duties assigned to mankind. We find no commandment of the Lord that human beings may live like angels. In view of this, St. Paul's suggestion to abstain from sex even among the married people is merely his personal view without any authority from the Lord conveyed by any of the Prophets. In this respect, St. Paul's instructions for celibacy and

devotion of his entire time to praise and prayer of God, repudiate the divine injunctions pertaining to marriage, treatment with women and children, procreation, earning the livelihood, doing justice with the people giving alms to the poor and rendering help to the needy as enjoined by the Lord. All these tasks had been the essential features for the test and trial of man on earth. If anyone tries to evade all such responsibilities he is playing foul against the primary conditions of his test and trial on earth.

The New Catholic Encyclopedia records that:

The practice of celibacy in the church, or the renunciation of marriage undertaken implicitly or explicitly for the purpose of practicing perfect chastity, **is an almost uniquely Christian institution whose history reflects the idealism and, at times the contradictions of Christian asceticism.**³¹⁸

Paul praised celibacy and virginity as a more perfect state, since it is the condition for a more fervent consecration to God, avoids earthly concerns, and prepares for the possession of eschatological goods (1 Cor 7.26–35). The unmarried are able to concentrate only on God.³¹⁹

Mandatory celibacy was never part of the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth nor was it a practice of the twelve. Many of the early disciples were married and even travelled with their wives.³²⁰ It was St. Paul of Tarsus who advised his followers to refrain from marriage as well as sex. Even so it took a few centuries to the Christians to promulgate the preachings of St. Paul about marriage and sex.

The Patristic Age. During the first three or four centuries, no law was promulgated prohibiting clerical marriage. Celibacy was thus a matter of choice for bishops, priests, and deacons. Under certain conditions, as shall be evident below, they were permitted to contract marriage and live as married men.

CLERICAL MARRIAGE PERMITTED:

Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–c. 215), commenting on the Pauline texts, stated that marriage, if used properly, is a way of salvation for all: priests, deacons, and laymen (Stromata 1.3.12; Patrologia Graeca, ed. J. P. Migne, 8:1189). The Synod of Gangra (c. 345) condemned manifestations of false asceticism, among others the refusal to

³¹⁸ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd Ed. Executive Editor: Berard L. Marthaler, Vol. 3, (Farmington Hills, The Gale Group Inc. MI, 2003), s.v. 'celibacy', p. 322.

³¹⁹ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd Ed, p. 322.

³²⁰ *A Brief History of Celibacy*, Voice of the Faith.

attend divine worship celebrated by married priests (...). The apostolic constitutions (c. 400) excommunicated a priest or bishop who left his wife "under pretence of piety" (...). Socrates (Ecclesiastical History 1.1.11; Patrologia Graeca 67:101), Sozomen (Ecclesiastical History 1.1.23; Patrologia Graeca 67:925), and Gelasius of Cyzicus (...) stated that **new tendencies at the beginning of the 4th century had tried to prohibit clerical marriage**, but until that time individual choice had been the rule. They reveal that when Bishop Hosius (Ossius) of Córdoba sought to have the First Council of Nicaea (325) pass a decree requiring celibacy, the Egyptian Bishop PAPHNUTIUS, himself un-married, protested that such a rule would be difficult and imprudent. He further emphasized that celibacy should be a matter of vocation and personal choice. The Council accepted this point of view and took measures to prohibit clandestine marriages with consecrated virgins.³²¹

By the time of Gregory the Great (Pope 590-604) and in the East by council in Trullo (692) it became a letter of Law prohibiting priestly marriages in the Christendom. Since then there had been strong disapproval of certain marriages and a very strong desire to secure celibacy in clergy. The Christian history, however, from the 6th century to the present times depicts extreme moral depravity of the unmarried clergy for which one can find ample records through out the history of the church. Avoiding going into details here, we may point out that exceptions to the rule of celibacy had always been there. Ultimately Martin Luther (1483-1546) came up with his arguments in favor of the marriage of the priests. Marriage, thereafter, became permissible for the clergy of the **Protestant** faith. Presently, the **Anglicans and the Anabaptists strongly prefer a married clergy**. There are others who praise the divine vocation of marriage and **even Roman Catholic clergy in Latin America and Eastern Europe have started admitting the married priests**.

Gandhi Ji, in sexual matters, was a firm believer in the religious view of the ancient Indian moralists who held that celibacy was conducive to spiritual and material excellence, that marriage was a concession to human nature, and that the

³²¹ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd Ed. s.v. 'celibacy', p. 322-3.

retention of 'the seed' was the greatest virtue.³²²

It is strange that even Gandhi followed the ancient Indian moralists than the divine purpose of creation of man as male and female. He failed to observe that the over-doing of the so-called ancient moralists cannot be given preference over the verdict and purpose of the Almighty to create human beings in a fashion different from the angels. Avoiding sex and procreation is an evasion from the duties enjoined by the Almighty. The self-conceived holiness by refraining from sex, therefore, cannot overrule the purpose and the commandments of the Lord.

Many mystics and sages in the world had been advising the people to refrain from all pleasure and human needs including clean food, shelter and even lawful sex to be counted among the men of God. As against them, the overwhelming majority of the prophets had been living like normal human beings eating, drinking, marrying, producing children and doing ordinary jobs to look after their families. The prophets have usually been working with their own hands and doing charitable works. They always continued to guide the human beings towards the right path living amidst the society. Fleeing from worldly matters and responsibilities, therefore, earns no special favor of the Lord.

The concept of abstention from lawfully permissible things was, therefore, against the teachings of all the messengers of the Lord. The underlining idea had been perhaps the pollution or profanity attached to sex. Married or divorced women, therefore, could not be counted among the chaste women and hence unworthy for their marriage with the holy people like the priests and the prophets. Some people despise sex in toto³²³ to be chaste before the Lord. Such a

³²² *Woman's Plight*, 273 quoted from *Indian Women Through the Ages*: (Bombay: Asia Publishing House 1964), p. 375.

³²³ Women usually used to be despised and deserted after the death of their husbands or after their divorce. They were treated as ill-fated, cursed and profane. The Holy Prophet ﷺ i.e. the promised messenger of the Lord being the last among the prophets, therefore, took it upon him to remove the stigma of widowhood or divorce from women. Out of 11 women married by him, only Aisha was a virgin, all others were either widows or divorced women. Since then, Muslim community do not attach any profanity or bad luck to such women and even the holiest among them readily marry

way of life had never been enjoined by the Almighty nor did it fulfill the purpose of test and trial of human kind under the circumstances the Lord had intended to test them.

The Lord never had forbidden human beings to eat Halaal food, drink water or to avail shelter and protection from all hazards. They were free to enjoy the bounties of the Lord and to pay Him thanks for the same. It is in the Qur'an that:

O Children of Adam! wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer: eat and drink: But waste not by excess, for Allah loveth not the wasters.³²⁴

As against this, those saints and sages who do not wash themselves to be clean and live in torn and dirty clothes have no commandment from the Lord to do so. Islam, in fact, advises Muslims to be neat and clean. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

الطهور شطر الايمان

Cleanliness is half the faith (Emaan).³²⁵

Jabir reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Verily, Allah is beautiful and he loves beauty. He loves the loftiest of affairs and disapproves of foolishness."³²⁶

No doubt, the LORD declared that **والله يُحِبُّ الْمُطَهِّرِينَ** meaning 'Allah loves those who make themselves clean and pure'³²⁷. The LORD further enjoined that:

وَيَأْتِيَاكَ فَطَهِّرْ ۖ وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ ۖ

And thy garments keep free from stain! And all abomination shun!³²⁸

the divorcees or the widows. **This is one of the greatest reforms to improve the fate of the women throughout the world.**

³²⁴ Al-Qur'an 7:31 Yusuf Ali.

³²⁵ *Sahih Muslim*, Chapter 1, Book 2, Hadith Number 0432.

³²⁶ *al-Mu'jam al-Awsat*, Hadith Number 6902, Grade: Sahih (authentic) according to Al-Albani.

³²⁷ Al-Qur'an 9:108.

³²⁸ Al-Qur'an, 74:4-5 Yusuf Ali.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ also emphasized the cleanliness in the following words:

Abu Malik at-Ash'ari reported: The Messenger of Allah said: Cleanliness is half of faith.³²⁹

In spite of all the stress on cleanliness, the LORD did not enjoin extremities on the believers. He said:

مَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ
حَرَجٍ وَلَكِنْ يُرِيدُ لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ وَلِيُتِمَّ
نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ (٦)

(...) Allah doth not wish to place you in a difficulty, but to make you clean, and to complete his favour to you, that ye may be grateful.³³⁰

Islam preaches a clean decent and ordinary living to its believers. It does not advise them to be abstemious from the permitted gifts of God nor does it allow them to avoid routine duties and responsibilities in the community. Similarly, Islam exhorts Muslims to marry if and when they can afford it. Sex within the married couples is something earning reward from the Lord than a despicable act creating filthiness or unholiness as supposed by some of the Christian sages.

As regards marriage and sex under lawful means, the humankind must remember the verdict of God that:

And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.³³¹

Even earlier to that, the Lord had blessed humankind along with his first commandment to them that:

Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.³³²

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.³³³

³²⁹ *Sahih Muslim*, Chapter 1 : MERIT OF WUDU' Book 2, Number 0432.

³³⁰ Al-Qur'an 5:6 Yusuf Ali.

³³¹ Gen 2:18 KJV.

³³² Gen, 1:28 KJV.

³³³ Gen 2:24 KJV.

It is therefore, natural that man must marry and have sex with his wife to fulfill the commandment given above. Besides this, there are numerous other duties that mankind must fulfill in accordance with the commandment of the Lord.

A Hadith of the Holy Prophet ﷺ elaborates the point in a beautiful manner:

It is narrated from Abu Mas'ud-al-Badri [رضى الله عنه] that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Without a doubt, when a Muslim spends money on his family while considering (the action as worship), it is an act of charity". [Reported by Imams Ahmad, Bukhari and Muslim].

Here is a Hadith from the Holy Prophet ﷺ to support the same:

Abu Dharr reported: some of the people from among the Companions of the Apostle of Allah said to him: Messenger of Allah, the rich have taken away (all the) reward. They observe prayer as we do; they keep the fasts as we keep, and they give Sadaqa out of their surplus riches. Upon this he (the Holy Prophet) said: Has Allah not prescribed for you (a course) by following which you can (also) do sadaqa? In every declaration of the glorification of Allah (i.e. saying Subhan Allah) there is a Sadaqa, and every Takbir (i.e. saying Allah-O-Akbar) is a sadaqa, and every praise of His (saying al-Hamdu Lillah) is a Sadaqa and every declaration that He is One (La illha ill-Allah) is a sadaqa, and enjoining of good is a sadaqa, and forbidding of that which is evil is a Sadaqa, and **in man's sexual Intercourse (with his wife,) there is a Sadaqa**. They (the Companions) said: Messenger of Allah, is there reward for him who satisfies his sexual passion among us? He said: Tell me, if he were to devote it to something forbidden, would it not be a sin on his part? Similarly, if he were to devote it to something lawful, he should have a reward.³³⁴

Islam also counts sex by the believers with their spouses among the rights of husbands and wives. To live singly or avoiding sex during married life as advised by St. Paul (Cor 7:8-9 RSV, 1 Cor 7:26-28 RSV, 1 Cor 7:29 and 31-33 GNB) therefore, contradicts the law of the Lord.

³³⁴ *Sahih Muslim*, Chapter 16 Book 5, Hadith Number 2198.

Similar had been the effect of the proposal of St. Augustine utilized to devalue and despise the human sexuality. Mr. W. E. Orchard, therefore, comments that:

(...) it is absolutely impossible to retain Augustine's conception of inherited sin apart from his theory that our corruption is due to the sinfulness of concupiscence, **a judgment that condemns marriage as sinful and the cause of the continued transmission of sin; monasticism is the only logical outcome of Augustinianism.**³³⁵

Christian Theologians thereafter continued to emphasize that **sin of Adam and Eve had been transmitted biologically to their descendants through physical procreation**. The concept of transmission of Sin through sexual intercourse, therefore, went a long way to **promote detestation for sex. Even Marital sexual relations were considered as expressions of concupiscence. All sex was termed as evil**. Blaming Eve for the fall led not only to the general victimization of women with wickedness but also to testify divine approval for subordination of the females. The same doctrine was thereafter utilized to legitimize male privilege and to exclude women from full participation in the richness of religious and cultural life.

The Christians identify women as guilty sex. Women are despised as sexual being. Christian antifeminism has always been linked to anti-sexuality. They preach a better future in a sexless heaven. This means that mutilated men are more acceptable to God. Hence, horrors of sex are also horror of women. As against them, Islam takes sex as a natural part of human life and a source of procreation for the animal world. Sexlessness or refraining from sexual activity is against the nature of human creation. The Christians also adopt celibacy under the impression of a passage in the Mathews where certain Sadducees had asked Jesus about 7 brothers marrying the same woman after the death of the oldest of them one after the other. The question was that on resurrection to whom shall that woman be married. Jesus has been reported having replied that:

28. Now, on the day when the dead rise to life, whose wife will she be? All of them had married her." **29.** Jesus answered them, "How wrong you are! It is because you don't know the

³³⁵ W. E. Orchard, D.D, *Modern Theories of Sin*, p. 23.

Scriptures or God's power. **30.** For when the dead rise to life, they will be like the angels in heaven and will not marry.³³⁶

We doubt that Jesus might ever have uttered such words. No scripture affirms the point that on resurrection, people will be like the angels. **If so, it eliminates the species known as man.** As against this, Islam has revealed that human beings will rise up as human beings males and females and each one of them will be rewarded appropriately (Al-Qur'an 33:35). Since the Lord has prepared great reward for all types of men and women in hereafter, therefore, it proves that both men as well as women will be the entrants of hell as well as heaven. Similarly, The Lord had promised males to be bestowed with the most beautiful and chaste females known as Houris in the gardens of heaven (Al-Qur'an 55:56).

Now if all people will be like angels on their resurrection, they being spirits will be unable to derive any benefits from the rewards in the paradise promised by the Lord. Similarly, the spirits will also be immune to the punishments in the Hell. As against this, the Qur'an and the Ahadith have repeatedly confirmed most excellent atmosphere, foods, drinks, all sorts of enjoyments with beautiful male or female spouses in the paradise providing physical pleasures to the human beings there (e.g. Al-Qur'an 2:25, 55:46-77, 56:17-37). The verse No. 47:15 reveals both the rewards to the righteous people punishment to the wrongdoers. Similarly, the non-believers and arrogant transgressors of the commandments of the Lord will be punished in the blazing fire of the hell (e.g. see Al-Qur'an 55:41-44, 56:51-56). It is worth noting here that the all the revelations referred to above and many others including Ahadith of the Prophet ﷺ pertain to human beings with the soul and body as they had on Earth.

Similarly, although human beings will be enjoying sex with their most beautified wives in the paradise and also with the Hoors i.e. the virgins in the paradise yet their mode of sex had not been disclosed to us. It is, however, certain that it will be different from the worldly manner in the sense that they neither lead to procreation nor create any

³³⁶ Mat 22:28-30 GNB.

pollution or uncleanness in men or women. No one will need to take a bath after the sex. Everything will be pure there and just perfume evaporating from their bodies will remove the traces of the sexual act. Same will be about all types of food they eat and they will have no excretions from the body. Just a sweat or a perfume will evaporate everything eaten by a man or woman.

Sanctification of Virginity by the Christians

Before discussing the sanctification of virginity by the Christians, it may be useful to trace the prominence of virginity in the Old Testament which enjoins for the priests that:

7. They shall not take a wife that is a whore, or profane; neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband: for he is holy unto his God. **8.** Thou shalt sanctify him therefore; for he offereth the bread of thy God: he shall be holy unto thee: for I the LORD, which sanctify you, am holy.³³⁷

About the high priest, it has been said that:

13. And he shall take a wife in her virginity. **14.** A widow, or a divorced woman, or profane, or an harlot, these shall he not take: but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife.³³⁸

This mention of divorced women, widows, profanes or harlots in a single sentence had destroyed the sanctity of the lawful marriage of priests with any woman except the virgins. Counting divorcees and the widows as polluted women like the adulterous one was an unjustified disgrace and condemnation of the ill-fated divorcees who instead of any misdeed on their part had been deserted by their husbands to replace them with younger and more attractive women. This also included those divorcees who could not pull on with their ill-tempered and corrupt husbands. The Old Testament took no account of the fact that life and death had always been the prerogative of the creator of the heavens and Earth. This was the reason that Islam did not prohibit marriage with widows or the divorcees. Similarly a divorced woman does not mean a profane or despised one. Instead of God's law, therefore, the prohibition of

³³⁷ Lev 21:7-8 KJV.

³³⁸ Lev 21:13-14 KJV.

remarrying widows or the divorced women seems to be the handiwork of the misogynistic sages or scribes of Israel.

There never had been a prophet or a priest greater than the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. No priest could, therefore, be holier than the promised messenger of Allah. By marrying divorced women, widows, the slaves women and the wife of an ex-slave, he removed the stigma of pollution and inferiority from the ill-fated women throughout the world.

Even a cursory study of **Buddhism reveals that it associates women with sin and evil**. It has, therefore, been narrated that:

A frequently recurring concept is that woman, particularly as a sexual being, is associated with sin and evil. In Buddhism and Christianity particularly, this has been a central idea, and it has resulted in each case in insistence on a celibate priesthood. Only the man who is undefiled by woman's sexual allurements is fit to perform the highest religious function.³³⁹

It is certain that the sensuality of the early Christians frequently mocked their ascetic doctrines. Gibbon remarks: **Since desire was imputed as a crime**, and marriage was tolerated as a defect, **it was consistent with the same principles to consider a state of celibacy as the nearest approach to the divine perfection.**³⁴⁰

Christian fathers have always been preaching that all forms of intercourse of sexes other than lifelong union was criminal. Gaius Musonius Rufus, the Roman stoic philosopher of the 1st century A.D. had asserted that "no union of the sexes other than marriage was permissible." As against this, the ascetic notion of the impurity even of marriage may be traced in the early Christian fathers. **The object of the ascetic was to attract men to a life of virginity which was termed as privileged state of life.** Marriage was, therefore, treated as an inferior state. If so the blemish must be converted towards the Almighty who created human beings as males and females and ordained that "it is not good for man to be alone".

³³⁹ *Woman's Plight*, p. 60. quoted from David and Vira Mace, *Marriage East and West*, (Mac Gibbon and Knee, London, 1960). p. 77.

³⁴⁰ Foote & Wheeler, *Crimes of Christianity*, (London: Clerkenwell Green, E.C. 1887), p. 18.

There also had been a queer concept of virginity or chastity in marriage. Lecky refers to the bride of a rich young Gaul named Injurious who had vowed for virginity even in her marriage. It has been reported that Injurious agreed to observe her vow and on her death, he restored her to God as immaculate as he had received her.³⁴¹ Abstention from sex was regarded as the most important of all virtues. Apollonius of Tyana (15 – 100 c.e.) lived on this ground a life of celibacy. Hypatia is said to have maintained the unnatural position of a virgin wife.³⁴²

Hypatia (born c. AD 350 – 370; died 415 A.D.) was a mathematician, astronomer, and philosopher in Egypt, then a part of greater Greece. She was the head of the Neoplatonic school at Alexandria, where she taught philosophy and astronomy (Wikipedia). Alexandria's bishop Theophylus (d. 412) had been her pupil who continued to permit her to pursue her intellectual endeavors. Shortly after his death, Hypatia became the victim of a particularly brutal murder at the hands of a gang of the Christian zealots. (Britannica).

Alexandria grew to epitomize the best aspects of civilized urban life. Early writers like Strabo (63 BCE-21 CE) describe the city as "magnificent" and the university was held in such high regard that scholars flocked there from around the world. **The great Library of Alexandria is said to have held 500,000 books on its shelves in the main building and more in an adjacent annex.** As a professor at the university, Hypatia would have had daily access to this resource and it seems clear she took full advantage of it.

In 415 CE, on her way home from delivering her daily lectures at the university, Hypatia was attacked by a mob of Christian monks, dragged from her chariot down the street **into a church, and was there stripped naked, beaten to death, and burned.** In the aftermath of Hypatia's death the University of Alexandria was sacked and burned on orders from Cyril, pagan temples were torn down, and there was a mass exodus of intellectuals and artists from the newly-Christianized city of Alexandria. Cyril was later declared a saint by the church for his efforts in suppressing paganism and fighting for the true faith.³⁴³

³⁴¹ Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, pp. 342.

³⁴² Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, pp. 334.

³⁴³ *Ancient History Encyclopedia* s.v. Hypatia of Alexandria by Joshua J. Mark (published on 02 September 2009)

Dr. F.W. Mattox (1909-2001) has given a concise note on celibacy as reproduced below:

The effect of asceticism was to be seen in the current conception that the **conjugate life was inferior to the celibate**. Since the priests were considered superior in living to the average layman, it was a simple step in the evolution of thought for the two ideas to amalgamate and produce the notion that priests should be unmarried. This was easier thought than practiced, however, **resulting in widespread immorality among the clergy**. It is obviously against nature and a mark of apostasy (1 Tim. 4:3), but was nevertheless enforced by Gregory VII. Prior to his reign the doctrine of compulsory celibacy had been discussed but not universally accepted. It was one of the points under consideration at the first ecumenical council of Nicaea in 325. **Since Gregory this unnatural prohibition has only produced immorality**. In the years preceding the reformation movement, it was a matter of considerable resentment among the religious minded of Europe.³⁴⁴

The fact is that celibacy or monasticism is a clear-cut violation of the first commandment of the Lord in the Genesis i.e.

27. So God created man (...) male and female created he them. **28.** And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.³⁴⁵

In addition to the above, we also find that:

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to live alone. I will make a suitable companion to help him."³⁴⁶

All this shows that creation of human beings as males and females and giving them the primary duty of multiplying and filling the earth to do hundreds of things there all are part of the worship of the Almighty. Man, therefore, had to fulfill all his assignments as man rather than trying to behave like angels who differ from men in the purpose of

³⁴⁴ F. W. Mattox, *The Eternal Kingdom*, (Arkansas: Gospel Light Pub. Company, 1961), p. 219

³⁴⁵ Gen 1:27-28 KJV.

³⁴⁶ Gen, 2:18 GNB.

their creation, nature of creation and duties assigned to them.

It has been observed that in spite of the most stringent laws passed by the popes against Concubineage and secret marriages of the priests or monks, the Law of Celibacy was poorly observed in greater parts of Christendom. To elucidate the point, we quote below a long passage from the Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.

Almost the greater and better part of the English clergy were the sons of priests (...) Adrian IV (1154-1159), the only English pope was the son of a monk of St. Albans an abbey which at a later period became notorious for its **licentious degeneracy**. The Bishop of Ely's, concubine Maud of Ramsbury, defended his castle of Devizes (1139) until her son was held up before her eyes and the threat was made to hang him. The Papal legates coming to England insisted upon the clergy abandoning their concubines; but one of them at least, the Cardinal of Crema, most urgent in these exhortations, was himself caught with a harlot after celebrating mass. In the middle of the 15th cent., de la Bere, bishop of St. David's, by his own statement (1452), drew 400 marks³⁴⁷ yearly from priests for the privilege of having concubines, in the earlier part of the 14th cent., Pelayo Alvarez, bishop of Silves in Portugal, in his famous 'Lament of the Church' (*de Planctu Ecclesiae*), declares that the **clergy of Portugal lived freely with women, even women of noble birth**, in life-long compacts, and that their children were almost as numerous as the children of laymen. John of Paris in his tracts (about 1330) questioned whether the law of celibacy should not be withdrawn, in view of the fact that it was so poorly observed. The clergy in parts of Germany in the 14th cent. refused to put away their wives. Nicolas of Clemanges says that laics³⁴⁸ in many parishes ('in plerisque parochiis') would not tolerate a cleric unless he had a concubine. Lea is forced in his concluding remarks on sacerdotal celibacy in the Middle Ages to say; 'The records ... are full of the evidences that indiscriminate license of the worst kind prevailed throughout every rank of the hierarchy. One of the most notorious offenders in high places in the 16th cent. was Cardinal Beaton of Scotland. On the eve of the Reformation, in Switzerland and other parts of the Church, the concubinage of the clergy was a large source of revenue to the bishops. **In the diocese of Bamberg five gulden was paid by the**

³⁴⁷ We wonder how a payment extracted by the bishop could convert something unlawful into the permissible one.

³⁴⁸ 'Laic' means a person who is not member of the clergy.

priest for every child born to him, and about 1500 such children were born annually. The income from the Swiss see of Constance from this source is said **to have been 7500 gulden in 1522.** Zwingli lived in the relation of concubinage as priest, and Bullinger and Leo Judae were the sons of priests. Erasmus complained of the unhallowed gains of bishops from taxes levied upon priests holding concubines. The 'Complaints made by the German nation' to the Diet of Worms (1521) included a charge against the higher ecclesiastical **dignitaries of permitting the cohabitation of priests on account of money.**³⁴⁹

Christian Ethics

Mr. Lecky writes that:

The extreme sanctity attributed to virginity, the absolute condemnation of all forms of sexual connections other than marriage, and the formation and gradual realisation of the Christian conception of marriage as a permanent union of a man and woman of the same religious opinions, consecrated by solemn religious services, carrying with it a deep religious signification, and dissoluble only by death, were the most obvious signs of Christian influence in the sphere of ethics we are examining.³⁵⁰

As against the Christians, Islam considers virginity as an unnatural state of life for healthy people in the marriageable age. The LORD had created them males and females to multiply and rule over the earth in accordance with His commandments. Virginity, therefore, is not only unnatural state of life but also violates the initial commandments of the Lord as per Genesis (1:27-28, 2:18). The natural and most suited position of the male was to earn the livelihood and to provide shelter and loving care to his wife and the offspring. Men being physically strong were supposed to do all types of hard tasks while women being delicate and weak were more suited to do lighter jobs such as looking after the house of their husbands and to rear the children. Islam enjoins separate duties to each sex. It attaches no sanctity to virginity or celibacy because both aim at avoiding responsibilities ensuing from the nature of their creation. Those who avoid

³⁴⁹ *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. III, p. 818,

³⁵⁰ Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, pp. 378-79.

struggle in the world just like other Human beings forget that they are following their own desires than fulfilling the purpose of their creation. The Lord said:

Verily We have created man into toil and struggle.³⁵¹

As such, those who flee from toil, struggle and other conditions of their test and trial during actual physical life of human beings on Earth are trying to defeat the purpose of their creation:

Be sure we shall test you with something of fear and hunger, some loss in goods or lives or the fruits (of your toil), but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere,³⁵²

Besides this, virginity or celibacy also lead to numerous vices such as we find attached to the monasteries and the clerical hierarchy of the church.

Christian Leaders Opposed Sexual Relations

"Many of the Church fathers were neurotics, psychotics or epileptics, as were various of the Hebrew prophets.³⁵³ All went much further in rejecting sexuality than anyone had ever done before. **Origen³⁵⁴ castrated himself, literally.** All the early Christian leaders expressed themselves repeatedly as opposed to sexual relations in or out of marriage **and regarded sexual relations an unqualified evil.**³⁵⁵

³⁵¹ Al-Qur'an 90:4 Yusuf Ali.

³⁵² Ibid, 2:155 Yusuf Ali.

³⁵³ The writers are extremely incorrect in their observation that some of the Hebrew prophets were neurotic, psychotic or epileptic etc. They fail to understand that the messengers or the prophets are chosen directly by the Almighty who can commit no wrong at all. No true prophet can, therefore, be charged with the disorders stated above. As against them, the high priests or the priests are men chosen or appointed by human beings and cannot, therefore, be superior to those chosen by the Lord God of the Universe. Priests being the followers of the messengers of the Almighty cannot also claim any equality or superiority over the least one among the prophets.

³⁵⁴ Origen of Alexandria 185-254 AD.

³⁵⁵ *Woman's Plight*, 274 quoted from Lundberg, Ferdinand and Marynia, *Modern Woman, The Lost Sex*, (London: Harper and Brothers Publishers 1947), p. 68. Alas! Instead of following the examples of the true prophets of the Lord from Adam to David and Zechariah, the Christians have been following their own predecessors in Christianity. To do so, they also set aside the first blessings and commandment of the Lord in the Bible (Gen 1:27-28).

Sex a Pollution Even in Married Life

The concept of pollution through sex even in married life is also evident from the anger of Moses against the commanders of the Army returning from the holy war against Midian as quoted below:

Moses became angry with the officers, the commanders of battalions and companies, who had returned from the war. He asked them, "Why have you kept all the women alive? Remember **that it was the women who followed Balaam's instructions and at Peor led the people to be unfaithful to the LORD.** That was what brought the epidemic on the LORD's people. So **now kill every boy and kill every woman who has had sexual intercourse,** but keep alive for yourselves all the girls and all the women who are virgins.³⁵⁶

This shows that sexual experience even under conjugal relations was pollution or a crime punishable with the death of women. As against this, Islam does not allow killing the children, the boys or women unmarried, married, divorced or widows even if they are pregnant. The conquered people male or female, infants, young or old have to be treated with kindness and compassion.

Cruelty towards the infants and hatred against married women in the O.T. is also evident from the following:

Samaria shall become desolate; for she hath rebelled against her God: they shall fall by the sword: **their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up.**³⁵⁷

Nunneries did not Entertain Girls from Poor Classes

Nuns were recruited from a limited class. They provided a career for girls of gentle birth for whom the only alternative was marriage. Prioresses of even some of the smallest and poorest houses were drawn from well known noble and gentry families. The evidence of medieval wills shows how useful nunneries could be to an upper-class family, with several sons

To follow their saints, they changed the blessings through sex into an evil. (Gen 2:18).

³⁵⁶ Num 31:14-18 GNB.

³⁵⁷ Hos 13:16 KJV.

to put into the world and daughters to dower. In the course of the Middle Ages wealthy townsmen, often connected by blood with the gentry, sent their daughters to convents in large towns like London and Norwich. **But we never find poor girls of lower classes as nuns**, because families of these classes needed no special outlets for their women. This was partly because women of working classes in fact worked in agriculture and industry, and partly **because families of peasants and artisans could not afford the dowry required to get into a nunnery.**³⁵⁸

Mary Daly reports about de Beauvoir that:

She describes in detail the repulsive ascetical practices of some female saints. The reader is reminded that St Angela of Foligno drank with delight the water in which she had just washed lepers' hands and feet³⁵⁹. There was Margaret Mary Alacoque, who cleaned up the vomit of a patient with her tongue and filled her mouth with the excrement of a man sick with diarrhea. 'Jesus rewarded her when she held her lips pressed against his Sacred Heart for three hours.' Moreover: 'She was the one who offered to the adoration of faithful the great red clot, surrounded with flaming darts of love.' There is ample evidence of the sado-masochistic fantasies of female mystics brooding over the lacerated body of Christ.³⁶⁰

Powers of the Pontiffs and the Priests

Far above all, the successor of St. Peter from his pontifical throne claims all Europe as his empire, and dictates terms to kings who crouch under his reproof, or are crushed in the vain effort of rebellion. At the other extremity of society, the **humble minister of the altar, with his delegated power over heaven and hell**, wields in cottage as in castle an authority hardly less potent, and sways the minds of the

³⁵⁸ Eileen Power, *Medieval Women*, p. 89-90.

³⁵⁹ Islam gives no credit to any dirty action when a sick person can be cured by adopting clean methods. Similarly, Islam does not appreciate self-inflicted sufferings which provide no benefit to others. Human body has its own rights in Islam and the Holy Prophet ﷺ emphatically asserted that Cleanliness is half of faith (*Sahih Muslim*, Chapter 1, Book 2, Number 0432). At another place it has been reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: الطهور شطر الايمان. i.e. purity/cleanliness is part of faith. Muslims have also been forbidden to offer their prayers unless they are clean from all filthiness. The Holy Prophet ﷺ also said Neither the prayer is accepted without purification nor is charity accepted out of the ill-gotten (wealth)...

(*Sahih Muslim*, Chapter 2, Book 2, Number 0433).

³⁶⁰ Mary Daly, *The Church and The Second Sex*, p. 67.

faithful with his right to implicit obedience.³⁶¹

It is, however, strange to observe that the ministers of the altar had themselves been corrupt to the extreme extent. Even so, according to the Catholics, these people, and not the Almighty, will be deciding the fate of the people allotting heaven or hell to them.

There is a long history of the degeneracy of the pontiffs and the clergy which cannot be described here in detail. As a sample case, however, we shall be describing only one aspect of the life of Rodrigo Borgia i.e. Pope Alexander VI (papacy 1492-1503). In spite of the fact that the Popes had been the champions of celibacy for the clergy **yet pope Alexander had many teenage mistresses besides many women such as Vannozza who had four children from him.** About him, it has been reported that:

Of Alexander's many mistresses the one for whom passion lasted longest was Vannozza (Giovanna) dei Cattanei, born in 1442, and wife of three successive husbands. The connection began in 1470, and she had four children whom he openly acknowledged as his own: Cesare (born 1475), Giovanni, afterwards duke of Gandia (commonly known as Juan, born 1476), Lucrezia (born 1480), and Goffre (Goffredo in Italian, born 1481 or 1482).

For a period of time, before legitimizing his children after becoming Pope, Rodrigo pretended that his four children with Vannozza were his niece and nephews and that they were fathered by Vannozza's husbands.

Before his elevation to the papacy, Cardinal Borgia's passion for Vannozza somewhat diminished, and she subsequently led a very retired life. Her place in his affections was filled, according to some, by the beautiful Giulia Farnese ("Giulia la Bella"), wife of an Orsini. However, he still very dearly loved Vannozza, **in a way he considered 'spiritual'**, and his love for his children by Vannozza remained as strong as ever and proved, indeed, the determining factor of his whole career. He lavished vast sums on them and lauded them with every honor. Vannozza lived in the Palace of a late Cardinal, or in a large, palatial villa. The children lived between their mother's home and the Papal Palace itself. The atmosphere of Alexander's household is typified by the fact that his daughter

³⁶¹ Henry C. Lea, *Sacerdotal Celibacy in the Christian Church*, (Philadelphia: William and Norgate, 1867), p. 18.

Lucrezia apparently lived with Giulia at a point.³⁶²

The Christians assert that the Law of Moses was based on materialism while the law of Christ had its basis in pure spiritualism. In view of this, we have to believe that Alexander's unlawful sexual union with Vannozza leading to birth of four children stated above were the product of pure spiritualism than any material aspect of life in it. Similarly, his sexual relations with other women also were spiritual than physical one. This spiritualism as stated above had been the theoretical innovation of St. Paul and his followers. Jesus did not teach any such thing. He did not diverge to the slightest degree from the Law of Moses irrespective of the fact that it may be dubbed as materialism or spiritual law. Jesus had said:

For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.³⁶³

The fact is that all the prophets of the Lord including Jesus himself depended entirely on the law revealed by the Almighty himself. We, therefore, find no law prohibiting marriage to the prophets or the priests either in the Old or the New Testaments. The Lord god had clearly directed Moses in the following words:

And the LORD said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel. And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.³⁶⁴

As regards Jesus Christ, he was one of the followers of Moses and abiding by his law as quoted above. The Lord never made any new covenant with Jesus nor a single word of the said covenant has ever been recorded by his followers. Jesus simply rehearsed the Law of Moses but no one cared to record the actual words spoken by him. As such, **the Christians have no word of God conveyed through Jesus Christ.** All their faith is based on the teachings of St. Paul who was a Greek speaking citizen of Rome. The Romans originally had no gods but spirits only.

³⁶² Wikipedia, s.v. 'Pope Alexander VI'

³⁶³ Mat 5:18 KJV.

³⁶⁴ Exo 34:27-28 KJV.

To convert the mosaic religion into Catholicism i.e. universal religion including revelations, paganism, mythology and Roman as well as Greek culture of the Old were all amalgamated under the title of Christianity. Since, the new religion was flourishing under the Roman Empire, therefore, Roman culture had been the primary block to build thereon the entire structure of Roman Catholicism developed by St. Paul and his followers. Hence, the proper name of the religion had been the 'Roman Catholicism' instead of any reference to Jesus or to his God. The Romans themselves had been admitting all type of gods worshiped by the people around them including the prevailing faiths in India. We, therefore, find the Christians ignoring the law in the Old Testament to accommodate faiths of different other religions.

The Latin Church took no care to observe or preach the Law of Moses in the Old Testament. They on the other hand adopted those faiths and rituals which were compatible with the culture and traditions of Greece and Rome. About them it has been stated that:

A still nearer approach to the discipline of Latin Christianity may be found in the rule adopted by Gautama Budha, who, six centuries before Christ, founded a religion which to this day numbers more votaries than any other among men – a rule which enjoins the strictest celibacy on his sacerdotal class, under penalty of expulsion.' If, as has been supposed, similar abstinence was inculcated by Pythagoras, it is doubtless attributable to the influence of his Indian studies.³⁶⁵

The religious observances of other races show slighter and yet distinctive traces of a similar principle. **The Egyptian priests were allowed but one wife, while unlimited polygamy was permitted to the people.** The priestesses of the Delphic Apollo, the Achaian Juno, and the Scythian Diana, were virgins. In Africa, those of Ceres were separated from their husbands with a rigor of asceticism that forbade even a kiss to their orphaned children; while in Rome, the name of Vestal has passed into a proverb. Yet this spirit is not to be found in the doctrines taught by Christ and his chosen disciples, if we read their words as plain practical precepts addressed to the reason of mankind at large, however ingenious may be the fanciful interpretations by which acute intellects have

³⁶⁵ Henry C. Lea, p. 23-24.

endeavored to support foregone conclusions.³⁶⁶

³⁶⁶ Henry C. Lea, p. 24-25.

COMPATIBILITY OF MARRIAGE WITH PRIESTHOOD

Mr. Henry C. Lee writes that:

The question as to the presumable marriage of the Apostles themselves has occupied a space far transcending its importance, in the controversy respecting this portion of ecclesiastical discipline. On the evidence of his mother-in-law and of his daughter St. Petronilla, Peter is admitted on all hands to have been married, while St. John's celibacy is agreed to with similar unanimity.³⁶⁷

There would appear to me no room for a reasonable doubt that the Apostles and their immediate disciples felt no misgivings as to the compatibility of marriage with the functions of the Christian ministry.³⁶⁸

During the first three centuries, the scanty records of the church which remain to us show no traces of the adoption of celibacy as a compulsory rule for its ministers.³⁶⁹

Similar conclusions are deducible from the apologies written about the year 150 by Justin Martyr, about 180 by Athanagoras, and about 200 by Minucius Felix. All of these Fathers, in defending the Christians from the accusations popularly brought against them **of indiscriminate licentiousness, of incest, and of other kindred disorders**, speak of the chastity and sobriety which characterize the sect, the celibacy practised by some members, and the single marriage of others, of which the sole object was the securing of offspring and not the gratification of the passions.³⁷⁰

Degeneracy of the Sacerdotal Body

The same scholar further adds that:

Neither the assaults of heretics nor the constant efforts at

³⁶⁷ Henry C. Lea, *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy in the Christian Church*, Vol II (London: Williams and Norgate, 1907), p. 25.

³⁶⁸ Henry C. Lea, p. 26.

³⁶⁹ Henry C. Lea, p. 27.

³⁷⁰ Henry C. Lea, *Sacerdotal Celibacy in the Christian Church*, p. 28. As regards gratification of passions, the Almighty has nowhere prohibited the same. As already mentioned, it is counted among blessings of the Almighty promised with good rewards provided it is between a husband and his wife.

partial reform attempted by individual prelates had thus far proved of any avail. **As time wore on, the Church sank deeper into the mire of corruption**, and its struggles to extricate itself grew feebler and more hopeless. We have seen that, early in the fifteenth century, **Gerson advised an organized system of Concubineage as preferable prevalent.**³⁷¹

The Catholic Church has nearly always been in crisis over clerical celibacy. ... The fact is that priestly celibacy has hardly ever worked. In the view of some historians, **it has probably done more harm to morals than any other institution in the West, including prostitution.** For everyone is on his guard against women of the street, whereas ministers of the Gospel, even when unfaithful, are given respect and personal confidences." – Peter De Rosa, *Vicars of Christ*, p. 395.³⁷²

[Nicholas de Clamenges Rector of the University of Paris] also records the extension of a custom to which I have already alluded when he states that **in a majority of parishes the people insisted on their pastors keeping concubines, and that even this was a precaution insufficient for the peace and honour of their families.**³⁷³

Another tract which passes under his name declares that in most of the dioceses the parish priests openly kept concubines, which they were permitted to do on payment of a tax to their bishops. **Nunneries were brothels**, and to take the veil was simply another mode of becoming a public prostitute. Cardinal Peter d'Ailly declares that he does not dare to describe the immorality of the nunneries. In a similar indignant mood **Gerson stigmatises the nunneries of his time as houses of prostitution**, the monasteries as centres of trade and amusement, the cathedral churches as dens of ravishers and robbers, and the priesthood at large as habitual concubinarious.³⁷⁴

When Ambrose was made General of the austere order of Camaldoli he set vigorously to work to reform the laxity which had almost ruined it. One of his abbots was noted for abounding licentiousness; not content with ordinary amours, he was wont to visit the nunneries in his district to indulge in promiscuous intercourse with the virgins dedicated to God. Yet Ambrose in taking him to task did not venture to punish him for his misdeeds, but promised him full pardon for the past and to take him into favour, if he would only abstain for the future — a task which ought to be easy, as he was now old,

³⁷¹ Henry C. Lea, p. 1.

³⁷² *A Brief History of Celibacy*, Voice of the Faith.

³⁷³ Henry C. Lea, Vol II, p. 1.

³⁷⁴ Henry C. Lea, p. 2.

and should be content with having long lived evilly, and be ready to dedicate his few remaining years to the service of God.³⁷⁵

Among the records of the reign of Henry VII is a memorial from the gentle men and farmers of Caernarvonshire, complaining that the **seduction of their wives and daughters was pursued systematically by the clergy.**³⁷⁶

The corruption of the Church establishment, in fact, had reached a point which the dawning enlightenment of the age could not much longer endure. The power which had been entrusted to it, when it was the only representative of culture and progress, had been devoted to selfish purposes, and had become the instrument of oppression in all the details of daily life. The immunity which had been serviceable through centuries of anarchy had become the shield of vices.³⁷⁷

Reformation in Germany

Towards the first quarter of 16th century, Concubineage by the priests was extremely widespread. Under the circumstances, it has been stated that:

In Zurich the secular authorities gave permission to all nuns to abandon their cloisters; in 1523, Leo Judas, Zwingli's foremost disciple and parish priest of St. Peters, married a former beguine, and in 1524 Zwingli himself married Anna Reinhart, widow of Hans Meyer, **with whom he had been living as man and wife since 1522.**³⁷⁸

During this period people like Christian Pontiff Adrian VI (1522-1523) started criticizing Luther by comparing him to Muhammad ﷺ. According to him such people were the one seeking to attract to his party the carnal minded by permitting marriage, even as the other had established polygamy and further, to abuse him for uniting the ministers of Christ with the vilest harlots. (Henry C. Lea, Vol. II, p. 60).

Avoiding the long story as detailed in his book, Henry C. Lea has concluded the chapter 5 with the following words:

³⁷⁵ Henry C. Lea, p. 8.

³⁷⁶ Henry C. Lea, p. 16.

³⁷⁷ Henry C. Lea, p. 30.

³⁷⁸ Henry C. Lea, p. 46.

The long struggle thus was over. The public law of Germany at last recognised the legality of the transactions based upon the Reformation, and not the least in importance among those transactions were the **marriages of the ministers of Christ.**³⁷⁹

Since then the protestant priests had no restriction on marriage while the Catholics had been sticking to the same old prohibition introduced by certain Christian fathers. Although the Catholics had become extremely vigilant to prevent immoralities among the Christian clergy especially under the influence of the Protestants but the position did not improve even by the time of the Council of Trent (1545-63). It has been reported that:

As the failure of all efforts to improve clerical morality under the existing rules of discipline was thus found to be complete, there arose in the minds of thinking men a conviction, such as Erasmus had already declared, that, **since all other measures had proved fruitless, the only mode of securing a virtuous clergy was to remove the prohibition of marriage.**³⁸⁰

Ferdinand I Favored Marriage of Clergy

Almost immediately on the consecration of Pius IV³⁸¹, in addressing to him an argument for the reassembling of the Council of Trent, or the convocation of a new council, Ferdinand seized the opportunity to ask especially for the communication of the cup to the laity, **and permission for the clergy to marry. The latter of these points he considered to be the only remedy for the fearful immorality of the Church, for, though all flesh was corrupt, the corruption of the priesthood surpassed that of all other men.**³⁸²

Lutheranism Allows Married Clerical Life

The dukes of Bavaria had been the main supporters of Rome during this period. About them, it has been stated that:

Yet now the influence of that important region was thrown in favour of the abrogation of celibacy, and Duke Albert was the first who boldly brought the matter before the council by a

³⁷⁹ Henry C. Lea, p. 76.

³⁸⁰ Henry C. Lea, p. 192.

³⁸¹ Papacy 1559-1565.

³⁸² Henry Lea, Vol II, p. 193.

demand for ecclesiastical marriage, presented on 27 June, 1562.³⁸³

Meanwhile Emperor Ferdinand I³⁸⁴ repeatedly urged his considerations:

A plan for the reform of the Church presented by his delegates not only called attention to the necessity of purifying the morals of the regular and secular clergy, but demanded that, to some nations at least, the privilege of sacerdotal marriage should be conceded. Another elaborate paper argued the question with much temperate force, and declared that many priests had already married for the purpose of escaping the corruptions of celibacy, while studiously preserving themselves from the errors of Lutheranism. **Out of a hundred parish priests scarcely one could be found who was not either openly or secretly married, and it was necessary to tolerate them to prevent the utter destruction of the Church.**³⁸⁵

Along his presentation, the emperor had also argued with much vehemence for his recommendation. Henry C. Lea describes that:

After asserting that, from the records of the primitive Church, celibacy was not then recognised as imperative, it proceeded to declare that if marriage ever were permissible, the present carnal and licentious age rendered it a necessity, **for not one Catholic priest out of fifty could be found who lived chastely.** All were asserted to be notoriously dissolute, scandalising the people and inflicting great damage on the Church. The request was made not so much to satisfy the priests who desired marriage as to meet the wishes of the laity, for many patrons of livings refused presentation to all but married men. **However preferable a single life might be for the clergy, it therefore was thought better to give it up than to leave open the door to the scandalous impurities traceable to celibacy.**³⁸⁶

Although the Christians have been trying to eliminate evils among the sacerdotal celibacy yet they had no success in it. It has, therefore, been said that:

It was evident that the efforts of local synods were fruitless to eradicate evils so general and so deeply rooted, while the

³⁸³ Henry C. Lea, p. 195.

³⁸⁴ Holy Roman Emperor from 1558 to 1564.

³⁸⁵ Henry Lea, Vol II, p. 195.

³⁸⁶ Henry C. Lea, p. 195-96.

necessity for some reform became everyday more apparent.³⁸⁷

In 1422 Cardinal Brenda of Piacenza had gone to Germany to preach a crusade against the Hussites.

The letters-patent of the Pope bear ample testimony to the depravity of the Teutonic Church,' while the constitution which Branda promulgated declares that **in a portion of the priesthood there was scarcely left a trace of decency or morality**. According to this document, concubinage, simony, neglect of sacred functions, gambling, drinking, fighting, buffoonery, and kindred pursuits, were the prevalent vices of the ministers of Christ.³⁸⁸

This question of the power of the Pope to dispense with the necessity of celibacy seems to have attracted some attention about this period. In 1505, Geoffroy Boussard, afterwards Chancellor of the University of Paris, published a tract wherein he argued that **priestly continence was simply a human and not a divine ordinance**, and that the Pope was fully empowered to relax the rule in special cases, though he could not abolish wholly an institution of such long continuance which had received the assent of so many holy fathers and general councils.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁷ Henry C. Lea, p. 3.

³⁸⁸ Henry C. Lea, p. 7.

³⁸⁹ Henry C. Lea, p. 27.

MARRIAGE PREVENTS CORRUPTION

Marriage

Marriage is a divinely ordained way of living for man and woman. Although the Jews as well as the Christians recognize it as a sacrament yet Islam takes it purely as a civil contract between a woman and a man for obtaining proprietary sex rights over each other and to procreate in a lawful manner. Although Nikaah (marriage) literally means joining together yet the Qur'an has described it as **حصن** (*Hisn* i.e. fort) meaning social, physical and moral protection to the couple joined together in wedlock. Nikaah, as such, is a formal union between a husband and a wife. The institution not only aims at preservation of the pedigree but also to gratify the natural urge of man as well as woman. It, therefore, is the most effective method to prevent sexual corruption in the society. *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* defines marriage in the following words:

Marriage has two main functions: it is the means adopted by human society for regulating the relations between the sexes; and it furnishes the mechanism by means of which the relation of a child to the community is determined.³⁹⁰

The relationship is essentially contractual, based on free willingness of the contracting parties. According to this, the *Collier's Encyclopedia* defines marriage as recorded in the following:

Marriage is an association of a man and a woman for the purpose of establishing a household in which children may be born and reared. (...) in law husband and wife are bound to each other by an intricate set of rights and obligations created by the law itself. Sexual relations are not only lawful between them but are unlawful between any except persons married to each other. More than that husband and wife are legally bound to permit each other reasonable opportunity for such relations. They are further bound to offer each other companionship in the sense that they are required to reside together at a place designated by the husband provided that it is a safe and reasonably proper place. (...) The husband if he

³⁹⁰ *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, New York), p. 423.

is physically and mentally competent is bound to provide for the support of his wife. In legal parlance, he must furnish her with 'necessaries', a term that is of course capable of somewhat indefinite extension.

The institution of marriage starts from Adam and Eve, the primogenitors of human kind. The Genesis reveals that:

God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.³⁹¹

God's First Commandment After the Creation

After the creation of humankind as male and female, the LORD blessed them and commanded **that they may be fruitful to replenish the earth and to subdue everything on it:**

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.³⁹²

To be fruitful and to multiply was, therefore, the first commandment of the LORD after creation of man and woman. Under the said commandment human beings were duty bound to marry and to procreate. By ignoring the primary duties decreed by the Almighty, there was no way to win appreciation from Him. **To be alone, as such, was against the verdict of the LORD:**

And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.³⁹³

The Genesis further asserts that:

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.³⁹⁴

In view of the above the Jews believed that the tradition of marriage was instituted by God. Marriage used to be taken as a sacred institution and marital fidelity a divine covenant.³⁹⁵ **The marriage ceremony in Jewish tradition is called 'Kidushin' (قدسين) which means**

³⁹¹ Gen 1:27 KJV.

³⁹² Gen 1: 28 KJV.

³⁹³ Gen 2:18 KJV.

³⁹⁴ Gen 2:24 KJV.

³⁹⁵ Pro 2:16-20.

sanctification.³⁹⁶ Usually, when the bridegroom places the ring on the index finger of the bride's right hand, he recites "be thou consecrated unto me with this ring in accordance with the Law of Moses and Israel". The bride then recites "be thou consecrated unto me as my husband according to the faith of Israel."

It is, therefore, evident that the Jews took marriage as a sanctification. They did not approve celibacy nor did they accord any excellence to virginity as compared to the married life.

John the Baptist and Jesus Christ were the last warners among the Israelites. They appeared on the scene for a short time i.e. about 3 years each during which they had been travelling from place to place. They, therefore, had an unsettled life due to which they had no occasion to marry. In spite of this, they did not despise marriage or sex through lawful means. St. Paul, the self-claimed apostle of Jesus was perhaps the first Christian saint to diverge from the Law of Moses (عليه السلام) and to disapprove marriage as well sex. Since the time of Moses (عليه السلام) till death of Jesus, we find no other prophet among the Israelites who could so boldly oppose the law of the Almighty i.e. "it is not good that a man should be alone" (Gen 2:18 KJV) except St. Paul who abrogated the said verdict by his own decree that:

(...) **It is good for a man not to touch a woman.** (...) I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I.³⁹⁷

Since, St. Paul had himself been a celibate, therefore, of his own he preached others to follow his example. After various other discussions on marriage and abstinence, he ameliorates the situation by saying that:

Now concerning the matters about which you wrote. It is well for a man not to touch a woman. But because of the temptation to immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her

³⁹⁶ *Collier's Encyclopedia*, ed. by Bernard Johnston, Vol. 15, (New York: Macmillan Educational Company, 1991) 'marriage', p. 440.

³⁹⁷ 1Co 7:1 & 8 KJV.

husband. For the wife does not rule over her own body, but the husband does; likewise the husband does not rule over his own body, but the wife does. Do not refuse one another except perhaps by agreement for a season, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, lest Satan tempt you through lack of self-control. I say this by way of concession, not of command. wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own special gift from God, one of one kind and one of another."³⁹⁸

St Paul's words that "It is well for a man not to touch a woman" (1Cor 7:1) and also "I say this by way of concession, not of command that all were as I myself am" (1Cor 7:6) express merely the thinking and desire of a celibate mystic who was neither a God nor a true Messenger of the Almighty. His wishful opinion, therefore, cannot annul or overrule the verdict of God who said "*It is not good that the man should be alone*" (Gen 2:18). To clarify the point St. Paul continues to say that:

To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is well for them to remain single as I do. But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion."³⁹⁹

I think that in view of the present distress it is well for a person to remain as he is. Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek marriage. But if you marry, you do not sin, and if a girl marries she does not sin. Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that."⁴⁰⁰

St. Paul, therefore, replaced the verdict of the Lord by his own ideology that marriage created hindrance to serve the LORD. As such, the term 'works of darkness' (Rom 13:11-12) used by him also seems to apply on the conjugal relations. He says:

What I mean, my friends, is this: **there is not much time left**, and from now on **married people should live as though they were not married**; (...), those who deal in material goods, as though they were not fully occupied with them. For this world, as it is now, will not last much longer. I would like you to be free from worry. An unmarried man concerns himself with the Lord's work, because he is trying to please the Lord. But a married man concerns himself with

³⁹⁸ 1 Cor 7:1-7 RSV.

³⁹⁹ 1 Cor, 7:8-9 RSV.

⁴⁰⁰ 1 Cor, 7:26-28 RSV.

worldly matters, because he wants to please his wife;⁴⁰¹

St. Paul committed gross error to predict that 'there was not much time left' due to which a married man should live as though he was not married. Since the LORD had created woman for the benefit of man, therefore, a married man would be ungrateful to the LORD by discarding the gift of God. Had the Christian acted upon the advice of St. Paul, they would have ceased to exist even before the end of the 2nd century AD.

We also cannot agree with his presumption that unmarried man concerns himself with the LORD's work. He did not take into account the possibility that an unmarried man might indulge in heinous crimes to satisfy his sex unlawfully. St. Paul also erred in presuming human beings in the likeness of angels trillions of whom had already been created by the LORD billions of years before men. From the very beginning the Lord had created the angels with the purposes differing from the purpose of the creation of man, therefore, each of the species was created with a nature which could be more congenial to the fulfillment of the purpose of their creation. Any trial to change the said nature of creation will, therefore, be a rebellion against the Almighty. The Bible tells us that:

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; **male and female created he them.** And God blessed them, and God said unto them, **Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it:** and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.⁴⁰²

God, therefore, did not create man as male and female without a purpose. Human beings had been required to fulfill the duties and responsibilities enjoined on them. Since avoidance of marriage leads to evasion of natural responsibilities of man, therefore, he will have to account

⁴⁰¹ 1 Cor, 7:29 and 31-33 GNB.

⁴⁰² Gen 1:27-29 KJV. The Qur'an also endorses this verse in the following:

And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquillity with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are Signs for those who reflect. (Al-Qur'an 30:21, Yusuf Ali).

for the negligence. We, therefore, find no wisdom in St. Paul to suggest spiritual excellence of the unmarried people over the married one by attaching holiness to celibacy and virginity. In doing so, he diverges not only from the commandments of the Lord but also from traditions of the Prophets like Adam, Noah, Abraham Moses, David etc. He says:

There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction. But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry. Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well. So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better.⁴⁰³

St. Paul is wrong to presume that an unmarried woman takes more care to worship the Lord. All the prophets lived a married life with the exception of those who had no means to afford a wife or who died before attaining the age of 40 years i.e. the normal age of the marriage of the prophets.

According to Eleen Power, even the great churchmen had a bias against the married life. Most of them took sexuality as a polluting factor. It is worth noting here that the Christians church or saints are not the only antagonists of marriage and sex through lawful means but many Hindu scholars also held similar opinions about marriage e.g.

"In Kautilya's time, marriage and property rights in women seem to have caused a good deal of litigation, for the Arthha Sastra opens the chapter on marital rights with the curious remarks that, "marriage is the basis of all disputes"⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰³ 1Co 7:34-38 KJV.

⁴⁰⁴ *Woman's Plight*, p. 89, quoted from Thomas, P., *Indian Women Through the Ages*: (Bombay: Asia Publishing House 1964), p. 72.

Marriage in Islam

While some other religions in the world prefer seclusion or celibacy over living in the society or marrying women, Islam exhorts the believers to marry to protect themselves from immorality. Many sages among the people of book have been condemning women as a low and mean creature. They took women as root cause of all evils and advised the people to avoid women like snakes and scorpions. To dispel all such misconceptions, the Qur'an laid down that:

And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are Signs for those who reflect.⁴⁰⁵

Living in the society as a married person and procreation of children, earning one's living by fair means and obedience to all the commandments of the LORD is the ideal state of life enjoined by Islam. The Qur'an has no concept of hatred of sex through lawful means. To live a married life is, therefore, more virtuous than living alone. Hatred for the female sex, therefore, has no place in Islam. It preaches to deal women with love, respect and kindness.

Islam Condemns Avoidance of Marriage

The Qur'an explicitly ordains that:

Marry those among you who are single, or the virtuous ones among yourselves, male or female: if they are in poverty, Allah will give them means out of His grace: for Allah encompasseth all, and he knoweth all things.⁴⁰⁶

In addition to the above, Islam prohibited abortion or avoidance of sex under the fear of increase in population. The Almighty, therefore, revealed that:

Kill not your children for fear of want: We shall provide sustenance for them as well as for you. Verily the killing of them is a great sin.⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁵ Al-Qur'an 30:21 (Yusuf Ali).

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid, 24:32 (Yusuf Ali).

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid, 17:31 (Yusuf Ali).

It is evident from the above that Islam does not favor celibacy or avoidance of marriage provided one can afford to have a wife. It is undesirable for a man in marriageable age and having means to support himself and his wife to remain single. Islam does not appreciate the monastic attitude nor does it preach to avoid sex within a married couple. This is based on a Hadith of the Holy Prophet ﷺ which contains the words "**your body has a right upon you and your wife has a right upon you**" (Full Hadith has been quoted elsewhere in this chapter). Besides being an ordination of the Almighty, the marriage is a tradition of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Avoidance of the same without genuine reasons is disapproved by Islam. Here is another Hadith of the Holy Prophet ﷺ guiding the believers to the most beautiful conduct:

There was a group of the Companions of the Prophet, one of whom said: "I will not marry women." Another said: "I will not eat meat." Another said: "I will not sleep on a bed." Another said: "I will fast and not break my fast." News of that reached the Messenger of Allah and he praised Allah then said: "What is the matter with people who say such and such? But I pray and I sleep, I fast and I break my fast, and I marry women. Whoever turns away from my Sunnah is not of me."⁴⁰⁸

Narrated Ma'qil ibn Yasar that the Prophet said: Marry women who are loving and very prolific, for I shall outnumber the peoples by you.⁴⁰⁹

Islam, therefore, declares marriage as virtuous act and disapproves avoidance of the same. Similarly, it promises good rewards in the hereafter to the fathers who hasten to marry their daughters soon after appearance of the signs of puberty provided you get a proper match for her.

Marriages vs. Celibacy of the Priests

By the end of the 4th century A.D., the Christian fathers themselves arrived at the principal that clerical marriages were criminal. They ignored the fact that they were violating the traditions of the prophets and priests in the Judaism and had no scriptural justification to declare the practice of the prophets as a crime. They never had any scriptural support for the said declaration. The church,

⁴⁰⁸ *Sunan an-Nasa'i* 3217, Vol. 4, Book 26, Hadith Number 3219.

⁴⁰⁹ *Abu Dawud*, Chapter 11, Hadith Number 2045.

however, refrained from taking notice of the evils produced by the system of celibacy. In their eagerness to convert their priests and the nuns into the unnatural role of angels, they could not imagine the atrocious immoralities of the seminaries, monasteries and the churches. They forgot that the Almighty had intentionally created men and women with sex and numerous other appetites so that they may fulfill the purpose of their trial on earth. The celibates in Christianity as such were violating the Divine Commandments and many of the celibate priests lived as hypocrites. Thousands of volumes can be written to record their sex crimes with the children of both sexes, with women and sex between adults of the same sexes under the cover of celibacy and whole time devotion to the Lord. The ultimate result of such embargo on sex was actually, a war against the nature of the creation of man. The obvious result was that **even the papacy during almost the whole of tenth century was held by men of infamous lives.** It has, therefore, been stated that:

An Italian bishop of the tenth century epigrammatically described the morals of his time, when he declared, that if he were to enforce the canons against unchaste people administering ecclesiastical rites, no one would be left in the Church except the boys; and if he were to observe the canons against bastards, these also must be excluded.⁴¹⁰

The overall moral character of the clergy and papacy can, therefore, be assessed from the following reports:

We may not lay much stress on such isolated instances of depravity **as that of Pope John XXIII⁴¹¹, who was condemned for incest, among many other crimes, and for adultery;** or the abbot-elect of St. Augustine, at

⁴¹⁰ Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, pp. 349.

⁴¹¹ Mr. Lecky perhaps refers to Antipope John XXIII. The Wikipedia under the title 'Deposition' records that:

During his absence John was deposed by the council, and upon his return he was tried for heresy, simony, schism and immorality, and found guilty on all counts. Gibbon wrote, "The more scandalous charges were suppressed; the vicar of Christ was accused only of piracy, rape, sodomy, murder and incest." John was given over to Ludwig III, Elector Palatine, who imprisoned him for several months in Heidelberg and Mannheim. The last remaining claimant in Avignon, Benedict XIII, refused to resign and was excommunicated. Martin V was elected as new pope in 1417.

Canterbury, who in 1171 was found, on investigation, **to have seventeen illegitimate children in a single village** or an abbot of St. Pelayo, in Spain, who in 1130 was **proved to have kept no less than seventy concubines** or **Henry III, Bishop of Liege, who was deposed in 1274 for having sixty-five illegitimate children** but it is impossible to resist the evidence of a long chain of Councils and ecclesiastical writers, who conspire in depicting far greater evils than simple concubinage. It was observed, that when the priests actually took wives, the knowledge that these connections were illegal was peculiarly fatal to their fidelity, and bigamy and extreme mobility of attachments were especially common among them. **The writers of the middle ages are full of accounts of nunneries that were like brothels, of the vast multitude of infanticides within their walls, and of that inveterate prevalence of incest among the clergy, which rendered it necessary again and again to issue the most stringent enactments that priests should not be permitted to live with their mothers or sisters.**⁴¹²

Cases of child sexual abuse by Catholic priests, nuns and members of religious orders, and subsequent cover-ups, in the 20th and 21st centuries have led to numerous allegations, investigations, trials and convictions. **The abused include boys and girls, some as young as 3 years old, with the majority between the ages of 11 and 14.**

The accusations began to receive wide publicity in the late 1980s. Many of these involve cases in which figure was accused of abuse for decades; such allegations were frequently made by adults of older youths years after the abuse occurred. Cases have also been brought against members of the Catholic hierarchy who covered up sex abuse allegations and moved abusive priests to other parishes where abuse continued.⁴¹³

From 2001 to 2010 the Holy See, the central governing body of the Catholic Church, considered sex abuse allegations involving about 3,000 priests dating back up to fifty years. Cases worldwide reflect patterns of long-term abuse and of the church hierarchy regularly covering up reports of alleged abuse. Diocesan officials and academics knowledgeable about the Roman Catholic Church say that sexual abuse by clergy is generally not discussed, and thus is difficult to measure.

The Commission revealed 7% of Australian priests between 1950–2009 were accused of abusing children, and that **one Catholic order had 40.4% of their non-ordained**

⁴¹² Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, pp. 350–51.

⁴¹³ Wikipedia, s.v. *Catholic Church Sexual abuses Cases*.

members with allegations against them in this period.⁴¹⁴

International Extent of the Issue:

The sexual abuse of children under the age of consent by priests has received significant media and public attention in the United States, Canada, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Mexico, Belgium, France, Germany and Australia. Cases have also been reported in other nations throughout the world. Many of the cases span several decades and are brought forward years after the abuse occurred.⁴¹⁵

It has been further reported that:

In 1995, Cardinal Hans Hermann Groër resigned from his post as Archbishop of Vienna, Austria over allegations of sexual abuse, although he remained a Cardinal. Since 1995, more than 100 priests from various parts of Australia were convicted of sexual abuse.

In Ireland, the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse issued a report that covered six decades (from the 1950s). It noted "endemic" sexual abuse in Catholic boys' institutions, saying that church leaders were aware of abuses and that government inspectors failed to "stop beatings, rapes and humiliation." The commission's report on church abuse ran to five volumes. The report noted the "centrality of poverty and social vulnerability in the lives of the victims of abuse. (...) **A 2012 police report detailed 40 suicide deaths directly related to abuse by Catholic clergy in the state of Victoria.**"⁴¹⁶

According to a 2004 research study by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 4,392 Catholic priests and deacons in active ministry between 1950 and 2002 have been plausibly (neither withdrawn nor disproven) **accused by 10,667 individuals of the sexual abuse of a youth under the age of 18.**⁴¹⁷

In the Republic of Ireland, starting in the 1990s, a series of criminal cases and government enquiries related to allegations that priests had abused hundreds of minors over previous decades. State-ordered investigations documented **"tens of thousands of children from the 1940s to the 1990s" who suffered abuse, including sexual abuse at the hands of priests, nuns, and church staff in three**

⁴¹⁴ Wikipedia, s.v. *Catholic Church Sexual abuses Cases*.

⁴¹⁵ Wikipedia, s.v. *Catholic Church Sexual abuses Cases*.

⁴¹⁶ Wikipedia, s.v. *Catholic Church Sexual abuses Cases*.

⁴¹⁷ Wikipedia, s.v. *Catholic Church Sexual abuses Cases*.

diocese.⁴¹⁸

Fr Brendan Smyth was reported to have sexually abused and indecently assaulted 20 children in parishes in Belfast, Dublin and the United States, during the period between 1945 and 1989. Controversy over the handling of his extradition to Northern Ireland led to the 1994 collapse of the Fianna Fáil/Labour coalition government.⁴¹⁹

In the United States, which has been the focus of many of the scandals and subsequent reforms, *BishopAccountability.org*, an "online archive established by lay Catholics," reports that over 3,000 civil lawsuits have been filed against the church, some of these cases have resulted in multimillion-dollar settlements with many claimants. **In 1998 the Roman Catholic Diocese of Dallas paid \$30.9 million to twelve victims of one priest (\$45.4 million in present-day terms).** From 2003 to 2009 nine other major settlements, involving over 375 cases with 1551 claimants/victims, resulted in payments of over US\$1.1 billion. The Associated Press estimated the settlements of sex abuse cases from 1950 to 2007 totaled more than \$2 billion. ***BishopAccountability* puts the figure at more than \$3 billion in 2012.** Addressing "a flood of abuse claims" five dioceses (Tucson, Arizona; Spokane, Washington; Portland, Oregon; Davenport, Iowa, and San Diego) got bankruptcy protection. **Eight Catholic dioceses have declared bankruptcy due to sex abuse cases from 2004 to 2011.**⁴²⁰

The church, therefore, took various measures to prevent marriage of the priests. It has been said that:

1.

The measures taken on the subject were very numerous and severe. At first, the evil chiefly complained of was the clandestine marriage of priests, and especially their intercourse with wives they had married previous to their ordination; and several Councils issued their anathemas against priests who had improper relations with their wives and rules were made that **priests should always sleep in the presence of a subordinate clerk; and that they should only meet their wives in the open air and before at least two witnesses.**⁴²¹

2. A married priest was denounced as living a life of sin. The priest, therefore, had to discard his wife:

⁴¹⁸ Wikipedia, s.v. *Catholic Church Sexual abuses Cases*.

⁴¹⁹ Wikipedia, s.v. *Catholic Church Sexual abuses Cases*.

⁴²⁰ Wikipedia, s.v. *Catholic Church Sexual abuses Cases*.

⁴²¹ Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, pp. 351.

Synesius, when elected to a bishopric, had at first declined, boldly alleging as one of his reasons, that he had a wife whom he loved dearly, and who, he hoped, would bear him many sons, and that he did not mean to **separate from her or visit her secretly as an adulterer**. A bishop of Laon, at a later date, who was married to a niece of St. Remy, and who had remained with his wife till after he had a son and a daughter, quaintly expressed his penitence by naming them respectively Latro and Vulpecula. **St. Gregory the Great describes the virtue of a priest, who, through motives of piety, had discarded his wife. As he lay dying, she hastened to him to watch the bed which for forty years she had not been allowed to share, and bending over what seemed the inanimate form of her husband, she tried to ascertain whether any breath still remained, when the dying saint, collecting his last energies, exclaimed, 'Woman, begone; take away the straw; there is fire yet.'**⁴²²

As against this, Islam counts lawful sex not only as permissible but righteous or meritorious thing for human beings. The Holy Prophet Muhammad being greatest of all the saints and the prophets of the Lord died in such a manner that his head was in the lap of Sayyida Aysha his wife. This must be taken as a great honor for women besides the certification that no unholiness can be attributed to one's sex or love with his wife/ wives. Islam grants full rights to women including the sexual rights against their husbands as discussed under the title '*Islam Condemns Avoidance of Marriage*'.

The Christian hatred against the sex even within the married life is also against the commandments of the Lord in Genesis 2:18 and the concept of husband and wife being one flesh stressed in the Genesis as well as by Jesus while replying to a tempting question of the Pharisees.

4. And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, 5. And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? 6. **Wherefore they are no more**

⁴²² Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, pp. 351-52. We don't know on what authority the so-called Saint continued to deprive his wife of her rights. He was, as such, clearly acting against the commandment of the creator.

twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.⁴²³

In addition to the above, we also draw attention of the readers to a Hadith from the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the following:

When a husband and his wife look at each other lovingly God will look at them with his merciful eye. When they hold hands their sins will fall away from between their fingers. When they engage in coitus they will be surrounded by prayerful angels. For every sensation of their delight there is a counterpart of reward for them in Paradise as huge as a mountain. If the wife conceives, she will have the rewards of a worshipper who is constantly engaged in prayers, fasting and in the struggle in the way of God. When she delivers a child, only God knows the magnitude of the reward stored for the parents in Paradise.⁴²⁴

3. Marriage was described as an impediment to power of working miracles⁴²⁵. Hildebrand⁴²⁶, therefore, exhorted the Christians that:

To withdraw their obedience from married priests, and kindled among them a fierce fanaticism of asceticism, which speedily produced a fierce persecution of the offending Pastors. Their wives, in immense numbers were driven forth with hatred and with scorn, and many crimes, and much intolerable suffering followed the disruption. (...) **Pope Urban II⁴²⁷ gave license to the nobles to reduce to slavery the wives of the priests who obstinately refused to abandon them, and after a few more acts of severity priestly marriage became obsolete.**⁴²⁸

Thank God Adam and all the prophets of the Lord had died much before the election of Pope Urban II. Otherwise, he would have enforced separation between them and their wives.

⁴²³ Mat 19:4-6 KJV.

⁴²⁴ Musnad of Zayd Ibn 'Ali, Beirut, 1966, p. 302, cited by Muhammad Abdul-Rauf, 'The Islamic View of Women and The Family' (New York: Robert Speller & Sons, 1979), p. 106.

⁴²⁵ Had marriage been an impediment to work miracles then Moses having two or three wives could not have succeeded to work numerous miracles recorded in the OT.

⁴²⁶ Pope Saint Gregory VII (c. 1015/1028-1085), born Hildebrand of Sovana, was Pope from 22 April 1073 to his death in 1085.

⁴²⁷ Otho de Lagery i.e. Pope Urban II was Pope from 12 March 1088 to his death in 1099.

⁴²⁸ Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, pp. 352-353.

4. The disorders, however, existed in the communities which were highlighted in the mournful confessions of ecclesiastical writers, by the poets and the prose satirists preceding the reformation. The disorders were also brought to light by other sources:

the atrocious immoralities disclosed in the monasteries at the time of their suppression, and by the significant prudence of many lay Catholics, who were accustomed to insist that their priest should take a concubine for the protection of the families of his parishioners.⁴²⁹

The afore-stated wide-spread insistence of lay Catholics to compel the Priests to take a concubine did not go unnoticed by the Christian fathers. In the footnote of the quotation, it has been elaborated that:

The first notice of this very remarkable precaution is in a canon of the Council of Palencia (in Spain) held in 1322, which anathematises laymen who compel their pastors to take concubines. (Lea, p. 324.) **Sleidan mentions that it was customary in some of the Swiss cantons for the parishioners to oblige the priest to select a concubine as a necessary precaution for the protection of his female parishioners.** (...) Nicolas D. Clemangis, a leading member of the council of Constance, declared that this custom had become very common that the laity were now firmly persuaded that **priests never lived a life of real celibacy** and that, where no proofs of concubinage were found, they always assumed the existence of more serious vice.⁴³⁰

Mr. Lecky asserts that:

It is scarcely possible to conceive a more demoralising influence than a priesthood living such a life as I have described. In Protestant countries, where the marriage of the clergy is fully recognised, it has, indeed, been productive of the greatest and the most unequivocal benefits. Nowhere, it may be confidently asserted, does Christianity assume a more beneficial or a more winning form, than in those gentle clerical households which stud our land, constituting, as Coleridge⁴³¹ said, 'the one idyll of modern life,' the most perfect type of domestic peace, and the centres of civilisation in the remotest

⁴²⁹ Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, pp. 353.

⁴³⁰ Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, (footnote) pp. 353.

⁴³¹ Samuel Taylor Coleridge (21 October 1772 – 25 July 1834) was an English poet, literary critic and philosopher.

village.⁴³²

It has been further stated that:

it would be difficult to find in any other quarter so much happiness at once diffused and enjoyed, or so much virtue attained with so little tension or struggle.⁴³³

In the opinion of Lecky, therefore, the marriage of a good clergyman:

will rarely obtrude his religious convictions into secular spheres, but yet will make them apparent in all. They will be revealed by a higher and deeper moral tone, by a more scrupulous purity in word and action, by an all-pervasive gentleness, which refines, and softens, and mellows, and adds as much to the charm as to the excellence of the character in which it is displayed. In visiting the sick, relieving the poor, instructing the young, and discharging a thousand delicate offices for which a woman's tact is especially needed, his wife finds a sphere of labour which is not once intensely active and intensely feminine, and her example is not less beneficial than her ministrations.⁴³⁴

Although Lecky refers to the noblest Excellencies attained by certain Catholic Priests by separating them from most of the ties and affections of the Earth, he also criticizes them of their indifference to all interests except those of their church. They, therefore, find them unfit for the office of educating the young. He observes that:

It can hardly, however, be questioned that the extreme frequency of illicit connections among the clergy tended during many centuries most actively to lower the moral tone of the laity, and to counteract the great services in the cause of purity which Christian teaching had undoubtedly effected. The priestly connections were rarely so fully recognised as to enable the mistress to fill a position like that which is now occupied by the wife of a clergyman, and the spectacle of the chief teachers and exemplars of morals living habitually in an intercourse which was acknowledged to be ambiguous or wrong, must have acted most injuriously upon every class of the community. **Asceticism, proclaiming war upon human nature**, produced a revulsion towards its extreme opposite, and even when it was observed in act it was frequently detrimental to the parity of mind. An impure chastity was fostered, which continually looked upon marriage in its

⁴³² Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, pp. 353-54.

⁴³³ Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, pp. 354.

⁴³⁴ Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, pp. 354.

coarsest light, treated the propagation of the species as its one legitimate end, and exercised a peculiarly perverting influence upon the imagination. **The exuberant piety of wives who desired to live apart from their husbands often drove the latter into serious irregularities.** The notion of sin was introduced into the dearest of relationships, and the whole subject was distorted and degraded by priestly celibates. It was one of the great benefits of Protestantism that it did much to banish these modes of thought and feeling from the world, and to restore marriage to its simplicity and its dignity.⁴³⁵

We, therefore, highly appreciate the observation of Mr. Lecky to expose the evils created by replacement of the divine law with the man-made law. God's law conformed exactly to the nature of human creation whereas man-made law was based merely on idealistic concepts of human beings. Divine Law must, therefore, be transcendent over the human law as the creator is transcendent over His creatures.

⁴³⁵ Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, pp. 355-356.

DIVORCE AND WIDOWHOOD

Widows

Divorce and widowhood prevailed throughout the world much earlier than Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The condemnation of widows had been universal than sporadic. **Judaism expressly forbade their priests to marry any widow other than the widow of a priest.** We find in the Ezekiel that:

Neither shall they take for their wives a widow, nor her that is put away: but they shall take maidens of the seed of the house of Israel, or a widow that had a priest before.⁴³⁶

The book of Leviticus enjoins the High Priests that:

And he shall take a wife in her virginity. A widow, or a divorced woman, or profane, or an harlot, these shall he not take: but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife.⁴³⁷

Look at the degradation of divorced women mentioned along the profane or the harlots.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was, therefore, the greatest reformer for establishing the status and piety of women throughout the world. With the exception of Aysha as the only virgin married by him, all other wives of the Prophet ﷺ were either divorcees or widows. Most of them had been divorced twice or widowed the 2nd or third time. All these women were exalted as the Holy mothers of the believers for all times to come. By marrying slaves and women from tribes other than Quraysh, the Holy Prophet ﷺ also abrogated the injunction in Ezekiel 44:22 that a priest cannot marry anyone outside the house of Israel. Muhammad ﷺ the greatest of the priests during all times in the world took the initiative to marry the widows and the divorcees to restore their status in the society. The Old Testament laid down that:

Suppose a man marries a woman and later decides that he doesn't want her, because he finds something about her that

⁴³⁶ Eze 44:22 KJV.

⁴³⁷ Lev 21:13-14 KJV.

he doesn't like. So he writes out divorce papers, gives them to her, and sends her away from his home.⁴³⁸

First of all we observe that divorce to a woman in those days was worse than a death sentence to her. On the other hand, it was an easy job for a husband to dispose off the woman as soon as he started disliking anything in her or he had the possibility of marrying a woman more charming than the previous one. Women had no rights at all. They could be disposed of just at the will of the husband without any provisions or means of sustenance for her. They inherited nothing as long as the parents had left some male inheritors. Even in the absence of male inheritors, the daughters could inherit the property of their parents only by marrying within the tribe of their parents. In order to marry someone outside their own tribe, they had to forego their inheritance. In the afore-stated circumstances a divorced woman finding little chances for remarriage were either doomed to starve or to earn for her and the children if any either through begging or prostitution.

As regards women, the Old Testament was not so generous to allow dissolution of marriage to a woman even if she hated the habits or maltreatment of her husband. She was bound to endure torture, misery or utter neglect from the husband without any rescue from the same. It was extremely difficult for her to remarry or to live a peaceful life thereafter.

Sati

Sati or human sacrifice with the dead had been an extremely old tradition especially in Egypt, early dynastic Sumer, Shang China, in India and many other places in the world. The Oldest proofs of sati with the kings or the pharaohs are perhaps found in Egypt. (For details the reader can study *The Premature Burial* in Adgar Edgar Allan Poe's "*Tales of Mystery and Imagination*", Padraic Colum, ed, Everyman's Library, 1908 pp 273-274). In the present context, we focus on Egypt about which it has been recorded that:

Many of the great tombs on the Umm el-Qa'ab were surrounded by large numbers of subsidiary graves (see Table XII). In the case of King Djer, these reached **a total of 317**

⁴³⁸ Deu 24:1 GNB.

burials, not counting those around the so-called valley temple, or the occasional individuals, like Djer's queen, entombed within the Royal sepulcher itself. The discovery of these hundreds of subsidiary burials immediately raised the question of ritual human sacrifice or Sati. Such practices are well known archaeologically and most often associated with societies undergoing transitions to state-type political systems, such as early Dynastic Ur or Shang China. Unfortunately, the situation at Abydos is much less of Ur and Anyang.⁴³⁹

Table XII: Frequency of Sati in the Royal Tombs of Abydos:⁴⁴⁰

Ruler	No. of Subsidiary Graves	Probable Cases of Sati	%	Possible Cases of Sati	%	Max Total of Sati	%
Narmer	34	0	0	0	0	0	0
Horaha	17	0	0	0	0	0	0
Djer	317	63	19.87	99	31.23	162	51.1
Meryet-Nit	41	33	80.49	0	0	33	80.49
Uadji	174	14	8.05	99	56.9	113	64.95
Udimu (Den)	133	40	30.07	83	62.41	123	92.48
Enzib	64	0	0	14	21.88	14	21.88
SemerKhet	68	68	100	0	0	68	100
Ka'a	26	26	100	0	0	26	100
Perisbsen	0	*	100	0	0	*	100
Khasekhe mui	0	2†	100	0	0	2†	100

* A small but undeterminable number of individuals were all buried inside Perisbsen's tomb.

† Between 10 and 15 individuals were probably buried inside Khasekhemui's tomb. Only 2 were found.

To date the most reliable analysis of the evidence for sati in the royal tombs of Abydos was presented by George Andrew Reisner in 1936, in the *Accession of Cheops*. Summarizing all the then-available information on the evolution of the Egyptian tomb from Pre-dynastic times through the early Fourth dynasty (ca. 5000-2600 B.C.), Reisner's work was a tour de force. In reviewing Petrie's finds at Abydos, he systematically analyzed and critically evaluated the evidence for sati on a tomb-by-tomb basis. The task was not easy and was rendered more difficult by the aura of sensationalism that surrounds human sacrifice. Many authorities before and since Reisner's time have taken the mere presence of subsidiary graves around royal tombs or monuments as root positive of human sacrifice, invoking parallels from early Dynastic Sumer

⁴³⁹ Michael A Hoffman, *Egypt Before the Pharaohs*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd 1980), p. 275-276.

⁴⁴⁰ Michael A Hoffman, *Egypt Before the Pharaohs*, p. 276.

and Shang China to support their case. Although a tempting comparison, the evidence supporting wholesale sati in Archaic Egypt is not nearly as clear-cut as that from Sumeria and China.⁴⁴¹

The location and various attitudes of the bodies show that they must have entered the grave alive and taken their positions as they could find place. . . . the movements exhibits are largely those of emotion at the prospect of death by burial under earth. The most common thing was for the person to bury the face in the hands. It was also not unusual for one hand to be over the face and the other pressed between the thighs. But most of the better preserved graves presented a case or two of unusual attitudes. In K XX, three bodies have one arm passed around the breast clasping the back of the neck from the opposite side. . . . In K X B, the very well preserved body AC has the head bent down into the crook of the elbows in a manner most enlightening as an indication of her state of mind at the moment of being covered. Near the body is another lettered PB, which lies on the right side, head west, but with the shoulder turned on the back, while the right hand clutches and presses an ostrich-feather fan against the face which is bent down toward the breast; the left arm passes across the breast so that the left hand holds the right forearm.⁴⁴²

Unlike these examples from Kerma and others found at Ur and Anyang, the so-called Egyptian sati burials did not occur in massive, communal death pits but, for the most part, in individual graves. Moreover, few if any Egyptian burials display the gross distortion characteristic of persons buried alive. It seems that they were dead well before being sealed in their tombs. The single most important clue to their fate—the initial reason archaeologists believed the people in the subsidiary graves were true victims of sati was the subordinate manner in which their humble tombs clustered around the great royal sepulchers. Unfortunately, as Reisner was well aware, there was another common Egyptian burial custom that could create the same effect.

In his forty years of work at Giza, he had traced the development of royal burial practices through the Fourth Dynasty. At that time it became common for important nobles and their families and dependents to be buried in systematically laid-out *mastaba* tombs clustered around the pyramid of their chief. The pyramid of Khufu, for example, is flanked on its eastern and western sides by a veritable village

⁴⁴¹ Michael A Hoffman, *Egypt Before the Pharaohs*, p. 277.

⁴⁴² Michael A Hoffman, *Egypt Before the Pharaohs*, p. 277.

of the dead.⁴⁴³

The fact that sati acquired a brief period of popularity under the first two dynasties (ca. 3100-2700 B.C.), is best explained by the social and political innovations that accompanied the emergence of the state. In Egypt, the god king sponsored a number of experiments at this time in writing, religion, art, and architecture, all calculated to legitimize and augment his political power as head of a newly unified state – the first of its kind. Most of the experiments were phenomenally successful. In the case of death monuments and the cult of the dead king (see also Chapter 19), the monarchy developed a theme that dominated Egyptian world view for the next two or three millennia. Yet some experiments did not work so well! **Human sacrifice never attained the scale reached in Shang China**, early Dynastic Ur, or Napatan Kerma, where early kings also experimented with the limits of power, and the custom of sati passed quickly from practice with the end of Egypt's period of experimentation about 2700 B.C. It was a symbol of the transitional process from prehistory to history, from small-scale chieftdom to a unified, totalitarian state. It was an aberration of power at a time when power was becoming the game everyone played. As such, it quickly fell into disuse once the rules of the game were firmly established after the passing of Khasekhemui and the Second Dynasty around 2700.⁴⁴⁴

Sati refers to a funeral ritual within the Hindus and some other Asian communities in which on the death of their husbands, the widows of the Kings, the princes and very rich people were obliged to die on the funeral pyre of the deceased one. In other words, it was a practice of concretion of a widow on the pyre of her deceased husband especially in India. It, therefore, can be termed as suicide by fire of a recently widowed woman. In other words the widow especially of the kings or the princes were doomed to be burnt under duress. The Hindus adored it as an expression of fidelity of heroic women who served as exemplars of devotion to their husbands.

As the wife is often sacrificed at her husband's death to company him into the other world, so, **very frequently, concubines are killed at their owner's death for the same purpose**. In Darien and Panama, all, and in Peru a

⁴⁴³ Michael A Hoffman, *Egypt Before the Pharaohs*, p. 278.

⁴⁴⁴ Michael A Hoffman, *Egypt Before the Pharaohs*, p. 279.

chosen few, of the concubines of nobles or of the Inca were Sacrificed. In New Zealand, at the death of a chief, some female slaves were crucified; their sacrifice at the death of important persons was common in Melanesia. The practice is common in Africa; while in India, at the death of a great prince, **not only his wives, but often his whole harem, died on the pyre.**⁴⁴⁵

In India, the origin of Sati can be traced back to 4th century B.C.E. from where it also spread to Java, Sumatra, Bali, Cambodia, Vietnam, Burma, Ceylon and northern Philippines etc. According to Manusumurti, Sati was optional yet it continued to have priestly support in Hinduism. Some of the Brahminical jurists and reformers deprecated suttee, **allowing the widow the option of living an ascetic life.** In the Hindu culture, widows were always considered to be dead. **They had to shave their heads and dress in white in no decoration. Widows were considered cursed one and inauspicious.** They, therefore, had to remain confined to the home. Some of them preferred to die than to live a life of frustration and wretchedness.

Since remarriage was strictly forbidden to the widows in Hinduism they were doomed to live a life of wretchedness. The *Encyclopedia of Hinduism* records that:

If the woman had several children and particularly a son, she might draw comfort and status from them, but if she were newly married with no children, she looked forward to a life of ascetic denial and loneliness as remarriage was strictly forbidden. As a result, many women succumbed to the social pressure of self-immolation on the fires of their husbands; **it is documented that many others were coerced to do so.**⁴⁴⁶

Usually it was pretended that Suttee was volitional on the part of the widows but there were many instances where widows were forced to die either at the pyre of their deceased husbands or to die in some other manner .e.g.

Maharani Raj Rajeshwari Devi of Nepal became regent in 1799 in the name of her son, Girvan Yuddha Bikram Shah Deva, after the abdication of her husband, Rana Bahadur Shah, who became a sanyasi. Her husband returned and took power

⁴⁴⁵ Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. III, p. 816.

⁴⁴⁶ *Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, ed. By Constance A. Jones and James D. Ryan (New York: Facts on File, Inc. 2007), p. 389.

again in 1804. In 1806 he was assassinated by his brother, and ten days later on 5 May 1806, his widow was forced to commit sati.

The practice was not followed by the Jains and the Buddhists. It has been stated that:

There is only one stray reference in the *Mahanisiha*, where a widowed daughter of a certain king wanted to perform 'sati', but she refrained from doing so as that custom was not in vogue in her father's family. From the *Epigraphia Carnatica*, we find that there were 41 cases of 'Sati' during the period A.D. 1400 to 1600, and out of these, two belonged to the Jains.⁴⁴⁷

Although Sikhism expressly prohibited Suttee yet it has been reported that:⁴⁴⁸

When the founder of the Sikh Empire Ranjit Singh died in **1839, 4 of his proper wives and 7 of his concubines committed themselves to sati**. Two wives committed sati when Sikh King Kharak Singh died, and five women joined the funeral pyre of Maharaja Basant Singh. **When Raja Suchet Singh died in 1844, 310 women committed sati.**⁴⁴⁹

It is evident from the above that there had been a general trend in the world to condemn or despise the divorced women and the widows. **The study of the Old Testament and the teachings of Christianity reveal that widows or divorcees were condemned as ill-fated sinister or profane.** They were treated as cursed women like harlots. As against them, **Islam was the only religion that emphatically eliminated the misconception of any illfatedness, impurity, wretchedness or villainy attached to divorcees or widows.** In Islam, under the normal circumstances, widowhood is treated simply as a mishap. There is no concept of inauspiciousness, wretchedness or profanity of a widow. The Islamic community is morally obliged to render the necessary support or help to the widow and to provide for her sustenance if required. Perhaps the most plausible solution

⁴⁴⁷ Sangave, Vilas A. *Facets of Jainology: Selected Research Papers on Jain Society, Religion, and Culture*. (Mumbai: Popular Prakashan 2001). p. 88.

⁴⁴⁸ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 21. (Chicago: William Benton, 1966.), pp. 622-623.

⁴⁴⁹ Wikipedia, *Sati (Practice)*.

to relieve the misery, loneliness and to provide shelter to the widow and the children was to remarry the widow. This was the best way to restore the social status, solace and sustenance to the bereaved family.

Remarriage of Widows

Islam takes care that no woman in the marriageable age may live without a husband. It acknowledges her marriage among her basic rights. In the countries where women exceed in number over the men in the marriageable age many girls or women are doomed to be alone. They as such are deprived to have a husband, children or some protector who could look after all their needs. Besides many women remaining unmarried due to lesser number of men to marry them, the widows are the worst sufferers in many societies which despise remarriage of the widows. In India, therefore, it had been a regular custom that in case of the death of the husband, the wife may herself sacrifice on the pyre of her husband. In case she refuses to burn herself, she has to live as a cursed woman till her death. Mohini Giri of India has, therefore, reported about the widows that:

This is probably the most marginalized section of society **9 per cent of the women's population are widows who lead a life of sexual exploitation and social ostracism.**

The piteous case of the widows of Vrindavan is well-known. It is horrifying to note that this happens in a society that treats its cows better!⁴⁵⁰

The Christian law also does not appreciate the remarriage of widows. According to St. Paul, a widow trusteth in god and continueth supplication in prayers day and night. Marriage to her is a hindrance to devotion in LORD. He says:

Honour widows that are widows indeed. But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God. Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.⁴⁵¹ But she that liveth in pleasure is

⁴⁵⁰ Mohini Giri, p. 189.

⁴⁵¹ This is simply a misconception of St. Paul conflicting with the divine commandments that it is not good for man to be alone and the commandment to be fruitful and multiply to replenish and subdue the earth (Gen 2:18 & 1:28)

dead while she liveth. And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless. But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man, Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work. But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry; Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith. And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not. I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. For some are already turned aside after Satan.⁴⁵²

39. The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. 40. But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.⁴⁵³

Widow's Marriage Akin to Adultery

In the Hindu Law, we find an extremely discriminating law unfavorable to women. It has been recorded that:

Marriage according to Hindu Law is a sacrament and in theory the tie is indissoluble. The remarriage of widows especially in the higher classes, therefore, is looked upon with disfavour by the lawgivers as being something akin to adultery. Such marriages were held invalid and the offspring of such marriages held to be illegitimate.⁴⁵⁴

Impossibility of Divorce and Remarriage

Originally there had been no restraints on divorce in the Law of Moses (Deu. 24:1-4). Towards the later periods of Judaism, however, there appeared certain **assertions in the OT which implied prohibition of divorce**. They were

⁴⁵² 1Ti 5:3-15 KJV.

⁴⁵³ 1Co 7:39-40 KJV.

⁴⁵⁴ *Woman's Plight*, p. 133, quoted from Gedge, Evelyn C., *Women in Modern India*: (Bombay: Kitab Mehel, 1929), p. 128-129.

perhaps depending upon Malachi who was stressing faithfulness of the people of Judah towards the Lord when he argued that:

Didn't God make you one body and spirit with her? What was his purpose in this? It was that you should have children who are truly God's people. So make sure that none of you breaks his promise to his wife. "I hate divorce," says the LORD God of Israel. "I hate it when one of you does such a cruel thing to his wife. Make sure that you do not break your promise to be faithful to your wife."⁴⁵⁵

These words seem to be a later insertion in the Malachi who being just a follower of the Law of Moses had no authority to change a dash or dot in the same. The prohibition of divorce had perhaps been adopted by Judaism during the Greco-Roman subjugation of Judea. The early Christians being the followers of Moses and subjects of the Roman Empire could not, therefore, differ from the Roman law and practice in this respect. Since the law of divorce was incompatible with the Roman law, therefore, the evangelists compiling the gospels under the Roman authorities could not afford to show the teachings of Jesus Christ at variance with the Greco-roman law. Jesus had, therefore, been shown taking strong exception to the unfettered liberty of husbands to divorce their women merely to marry other women of their choice. To stop the malpractice of frequent desertions of women, he has been reported having said:

Some Pharisees came to him and tried to trap him by asking, "Does our Law allow a man to divorce his wife for whatever reason he wishes?" Jesus answered, "Haven't you read the scripture that says that in the beginning the Creator made people male and female? And God said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and unite with his wife, and the two will become one.' **So they are no longer two, but one.** No human being must separate, then, what God has joined together." The Pharisees asked him, "Why, then, did Moses give the law for a man to hand his wife a divorce notice and send her away?" Jesus answered, "Moses gave you permission to divorce your wives because you are so hard to teach. But it was not like that at the time of creation. I tell you, then, that any man who divorces his wife for any cause other than her unfaithfulness, commits adultery if he marries some other woman." His disciples said to him, "If this is how it

⁴⁵⁵ Mal 2:15-16 GNB.

is between a man and his wife, it is better not to marry." Jesus answered, "This teaching does not apply to everyone, but only to those to whom God has given it."⁴⁵⁶

Similarly, Mathew had recorded from Jesus that:

It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.⁴⁵⁷

Although we can hardly believe that the words quoted above could be faithfully recorded words of Jesus Christ, yet we know that the concept had received further strength to become a dogma among the Christian community with the additional concept of the union of Christ with the church. Jesus had undoubtedly been a follower of the Law of Moses. Mathew quotes him that:

17. Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill **18.** For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.⁴⁵⁸

In spite of all this, it has been impossible for women to obtain divorce in Judaism, Hinduism and Christianity. Marriage could only be dissolved with death or fornication whether committed or alleged. The Christian fathers preached that marriage was a lifelong union of one man and one woman under all circumstances. This was the only form of the legitimate intercourse between the sexes. Sex without life-long union was, therefore, taken as criminal by them.

The afore-stated preaching of Malachi was further improved by St. Paul with his concepts of living, dying and resurrection with Christ as we find in Ch. 6 of the book of Romans. Verse 8 is quoted below:

Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁶ Mat 19:3-11 GNB. See also Mathew 10:2-12.

⁴⁵⁷ Mat 5:31-32 KJV.

⁴⁵⁸ Mat 5:17-18 KJV.

⁴⁵⁹ Rom 6:8 KJV.

2 Timothy (2:11) also endorsed the same. Ultimately Mark attributed the following words to Jesus Christ:

What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter. And he saith unto them, **Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.**⁴⁶⁰

St. Luke, however, seems to be utterly confused in the matter. He juxtaposes the self-contradictory verses 16 and 17 of Ch. 16 without any effort to reconcile the same:

16. The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. **17.** And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.⁴⁶¹

Since Moses (عليه السلام) had been the only lawgiver among the Israelites, therefore, Law of Moses (عليه السلام) had to prevail among them as also affirmed by Jesus Christ in verse 17 quoted above. As such, taking Mathew (5:17-18) and Luke (16:17) as correct we cannot believe that Jesus Christ might have uttered the words attributed to him as recorded below:

Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.⁴⁶²

In view of the above, it is unbelievable that Jesus Christ could have contradicted or annulled the Law of Moses (عليه السلام) after himself affirming endurance of the same. Moses (عليه السلام) had said that:

1. Suppose a man marries a woman and later decides that he doesn't want her, because he finds something about her that he doesn't like. So he writes out divorce papers, gives them to her, and sends her away from his home. **2.** And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. **3.** And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be

⁴⁶⁰ Mar 10:9-12 KJV.

⁴⁶¹ Luk 16:16-17.

⁴⁶² Luk 16:18 KJV.

his wife,⁴⁶³

It is, therefore, evident from the above that divorce and remarriage with another person was permissible in the Law of Moses (عليه السلام). Jesus, therefore, could not have destroyed the Law of Moses (عليه السلام) as attributed to him by the Evangelists.

The Qur'an asserts about Jesus having said:

(I have come to you), to attest the Law which was before me.
And to make lawful to you part of what was (Before) forbidden to you; I have come to you with a Sign from your Lord. So fear Allah, and obey me.⁴⁶⁴

No doubt, God did create male as well as female yet He cannot be held responsible for joining them in marriage. It was purely a human choice and a contractual relation created by them. It was also necessary that certain other people must be present to witness the contract. It is, therefore, wrong to allege the Almighty for any mismatch or a wrong choice made by human beings themselves. Hence, in case of detachment or estrangement between any pair, they have no justification to blame the Lord. Efforts must be made to bring reconciliation among the aggrieved partners. In case the arbiters from both families fail to find any possibility of reconciliation, they may suggest dissolution of the marriage so that the spouses may select new partners to live happily thereafter.

The Christians may, therefore, examine the results of the prohibition of divorce among them and also the widespread violation of this law in the West. The detailed study of the effects of prohibition of divorce and remarriage will definitely show them the ineffectiveness of the law attributed to Jesus Christ. The law that cannot be acted upon by overwhelming majority of the people must be abrogated as a bad law. Statistical study shows that almost 50% of the marriages in the USA today end in divorce. As such, large number of violations of this law in USA and other Western Countries proves it as a bad law. Similarly, the Christian West has adopted wide-spread practice of remarrying the divorced women. This proves the

⁴⁶³ Deu. 24:1 GNB.

⁴⁶⁴ Al-Qur'an 3:50 Yusuf Ali.

redundancy of the law banning the remarriage of divorced persons. We, therefore, arrive at the conclusion that the husband's right to divorce though permissible must be exercised only in the circumstances where there could be no other solution to the problem. Encyclopedia Biblica has it that:

The woman being a man's property, his right to divorce her, follows as a matter of course. As in doing so he must return the *Mohar*. No injustice is done either to her or to her family. The divorcee returns to her family and can, if circumstances favour, be married a second time from here. No moral stigma of any kind arises from the mere fact of her being divorced. Yet, we can well suppose that from the first the family of the woman would be disposed to look with disfavour upon such treatment, and the account which the husband was bound to take of the views and feelings of the wife's blood-relations (see above, s 2) laid from the very beginning a considerable restraint upon absolute freedom of divorce. The Deuteronomic law has unmistakably the intention of limiting in some degree the liberty too frequently exercised, without at the same time curtailing in any respect the rights of the husband. (...) Some restriction, however, was at the same time laid upon divorce by the mere fact that a writing bill of divorcement') was now required by law (Dt. 24 iff).⁴⁶⁵

Further it is enacted in D that the divorced wife if after divorce she has married again and had been separated from the second husband in turn by divorce or by his death, cannot again be taken back in marriage by her first husband. The old practice as to this was quite different (Hos. 83; cp 2 S. 814), and was similar to the old Arab custom; **the Koran in fact lays it down as a condition that the wife can be taken back only if in the interval she has been the wife of another man.** The manifest purpose of D and of the Koran alike is to put kind of check upon rash and inconsiderate divorce.⁴⁶⁶

All good law depends upon practicability of the same. No impracticable law can endure or survive for longer times. as regards Marriage, it is based on a solemn contract between the partners. It must, therefore, have a provision for its dissolution as we find in Judaism and Islam. The absolute indissolubility of marriage among the Christians has caused more hardships and wrongs to the community than providing any benefits to them. In many cases, it destroys

⁴⁶⁵ *Encyclopedia Biblica*, Vol. III, s.v. 'Marriage' p. 2947.

⁴⁶⁶ *Encyclopedia Biblica*, Vol. III, s.v. 'Marriage' p. 2948.

the very purpose of marriage. We, therefore, find large number of the unwilling Christian couples violating the fidelity which forms core of the contractual relationship. The bond of marriage in all such cases becomes more injurious than dissolution between the parties. The man-made law prohibiting divorce had caused innumerable troubles and corruption among the Christian community. The matter of dissolution had, therefore, been under scrutiny among the modern scholars of Christianity. The convocation of Canterbury in 1967 had called for a report concerning the dissolution of marriage. Para No. 9 of the report contains that:

Lying behind the debate on this subject during the last decade of the nineteenth century was the question of absolute indissolubility. Despite a strong and growing tendency to bring Anglican teaching into line with that of the Roman Catholic Church on this point, a number of eminent High Churchmen still maintained the opposite position. For example, William Bright, the church historian and liturgist, could write on the basis of his reading of the patristic evidence, **"I am convinced that the Canon Law doctrine [of absolute indissolubility] does not rest on Catholic consent."** A similar stand was taken by Edward King, Bishop of Lincoln. Appealing to the Matthaean exception and to the teaching and practice of the undivided Church, he affirmed in his Charge of 1895, **"I am unable to accept the conclusions of those who make marriage absolutely indissoluble, and so forbid the remarriage of those who have been separated, under any circumstances."**⁴⁶⁷

There could be numerous causes necessitating dissolution of marriage. Islam allows it reluctantly and sparingly. Since women are not to blame in each and every case of divorce, Islam attaches no condemnation to the divorcee unless and until there were convincing reports about some misconduct or bad temperament of the woman concerned. Islam obliterates the stigma of wretchedness or profanity from the divorced women and encourages remarriage of divorcees as well as widows so that they may regain protection and social status to live in peace and tranquility. This must, therefore, be taken as a great reform of Islam to rehabilitate women suffering from unbearable stress of

⁴⁶⁷ *Marriage Divorce and the Church* (London, SPCK 1972), p. 6.

destitution, wretchedness, loneliness and insecurity. The magnitude and importance of the problem can be assessed from the following:

America is full of widows. There are at present **nine million widows to one and a half million widowers**.⁴⁶⁸

This shows that there were 6 times more widows than the widowers in America during that particular time. There has been no improvement in the plight of the widows up to the present. The solution to the problem was to persuade young as well as old people to marry widows of their choice even at the cost of polygamy which had nowhere been prohibited in the revealed books or in the religious books of all the faiths in the world.

Islam's Prescribed Procedure for Talaaq

As against the above, we note that Islam acknowledges women as independent persons fully entitled to inherit properties from their parents, relatives and their husbands. According to the Qur'an and Sunnah, they can neither be put away immediately nor could they be deprived of their property received either through inheritance or through gifts etc. from their husbands. Islam ensures all their rights including property, and other provisions for the sustenance of the divorced women and their children. Islamic jurists have, therefore, gone into great details to enumerate and classify the rights of women covering various situations as the case may be. The Qur'an enjoins that:

From what is left by parents and those nearest related there is a share for men and a share for women, whether the property be small or large,-a determinate share.⁴⁶⁹

Islam treats women with respect and equality of rights with the males. It does not, however, preach perfect equality between men and women in each and every respect. The LORD created men with distinct qualities of power courage and endurance. As against this, women exceed in beauty, tenderness of heart and better inclination to rear their children. It was, therefore, in accordance with the principals of division of labor that men may be held responsible to earn living for the family and to provide the shelter and

⁴⁶⁸ *Woman's Plight*, p. 54.

⁴⁶⁹ Al-Qur'an 4:7 Yusuf Ali.

protect them from all hazards in the society. For better management of affairs, therefore, the Almighty held the males a degree above the females. God said:

Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient, and guard in (the husband's) absence what Allah would have them guard. As to those women on whose part ye fear disloyalty and ill-conduct, admonish them (first), (Next), refuse to share their beds, (And last) beat them (lightly); but if they return to obedience, seek not against them Means (of annoyance): For Allah is Most High, great (above you all).⁴⁷⁰

The said injunction does not, however, imply any despise inferiority or degradation for women. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

المرءة راعية على بيت زوجها⁴⁷¹

A Woman is the ruler of over the house of her husband.

Since it is the natural duty of women to bear and to rear the children, Islam relieved them of the tough duties and endeavors outside the house to earn their living. Husbands, therefore, have been commanded to provide for the sustenance of their wives and the children:

Let the man of means spend according to his means: and the man whose resources are restricted, let him spend according to what Allah has given him. Allah puts no burden on any person beyond what He has given him. After a difficulty, Allah will soon grant relief.⁴⁷²

God says:

(...) And women shall have rights similar to the rights against them, according to what is equitable; but men have a degree (of advantage) over them. And Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise.⁴⁷³

And in no wise covet those things in which Allah Hath bestowed His gifts More freely on some of you than on others:
To men is allotted what they earn, and to women what

⁴⁷⁰ Al-Qur'an 4:34 Yusuf Ali.

⁴⁷¹ *Islam ka Nizam e Iffat o Asmat*, p. 238

⁴⁷² Al-Qur'an 65:7 Yusuf Ali.

⁴⁷³ Al-Qur'an 2:228 Yusuf Ali.

they earn: But ask Allah of His bounty. For Allah hath full knowledge of all things.⁴⁷⁴

Islam does not treat the matter of divorce lightly. It accords utmost importance to the married life and permits divorce only under exceptional and inevitable circumstances.

Narrated Muharib: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Allah did not make anything lawful more abominable to Him than divorce.⁴⁷⁵

Narrated Abdullah ibn Umar: The Prophet ﷺ said: Of all the lawful acts the most detestable to Allah is divorce.⁴⁷⁶

The Ahadith quoted above, therefore, imply that the husbands must not divorce their wives abruptly either out of their whims, or due to trifling causes such as minor dislikes. They have also been forbidden to deprive the women of their inheritance. God says that:

O ye who believe! Ye are forbidden to inherit women against their will. Nor should ye treat them with harshness, that ye may Take away part of the dower ye have given them,-except where they have been guilty of open lewdness; on the contrary live with them on a footing of kindness and equity. If ye take a dislike to them it may be that ye dislike a thing, and Allah brings about through it a great deal of good.⁴⁷⁷

In case estrangement between a husband and wife prolongs for some considerable time, the Almighty has enjoined to adopt the following course.

If ye fear a breach between them twain, appoint (two) arbiters, one from his family, and the other from hers; if they wish for peace, Allah will cause their reconciliation: For Allah hath full knowledge, and is acquainted with all things.⁴⁷⁸

A God-fearing Muslim cannot, therefore, hand over the divorce bill to his wife and send her away without the reconciliatory efforts as enjoined by the Qur'an. Muslims are not, therefore, permitted to send away their wives abruptly just by delivering them either some paper of divorce or merely by uttering the words of divorce. They

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid, 4:32 Yusuf Ali.

⁴⁷⁵ *Saheeh Abu Dawud*, Book 12, Hadith No. 2172.

⁴⁷⁶ *Saheeh Abu Dawud*, Book 12, Hadith No. 2173.

⁴⁷⁷ Al-Qur'an 4:19 Yusuf Ali.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid, 4:35 Yusuf Ali.

have to fulfill many other conditions related to Talaat. God said:

The mothers shall give such to their offspring for two whole years, if the father desires to complete the term. But he shall bear the cost of their food and clothing on equitable terms. No soul shall have a burden laid on it greater than it can bear. No mother shall be Treated unfairly on account of her child. Nor father on account of his child, an heir shall be chargeable in the same way. If they both decide on weaning, by mutual consent, and after due consultation, there is no blame on them. If ye decide on a foster-mother for your offspring, there is no blame on you, provided ye pay (the mother) what ye offered, on equitable terms. But fear Allah and know that Allah sees well what ye do.⁴⁷⁹

The Arabs of Jahiliyyah (Ignorance Period) and many other people used to divorce women for uncertain periods and to take them back whenever they pleased. Women did not enjoy any rights of dissolution. Men enjoyed freedom to divorce women as many times as they pleased and to rejoin with them after considerably long times. There, as such, had been no end to the tension and torture of women remaining in a hanging position while being tied to their husbands. Islam brought an end to all such injustices with women. Husbands should either keep them with a kind treatment or get separated from them in a nice manner: God said:

When ye divorce women, and they fulfil the term of their (*'Iddat*), either take them back on equitable terms or set them free on equitable terms; but do not take them back to injure them, (or) to take undue advantage; if any one does that; He wrongs his own soul. Do not treat Allah's Signs as a jest, but solemnly rehearse Allah's favours on you, and the fact that He sent down to you the Book and Wisdom, for your instruction. And fear Allah, and know that Allah is well acquainted with all things.⁴⁸⁰

Husbands had the right to take back their wives within their Iddah i.e. before expiry of 90 days. But after expiry of Iddah, they must release them honorably and gracefully so that no burden remains on them to decide about their future.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid, 2:233 Yusuf Ali.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid, 2:231 Yusuf Ali.

The Qur'an has clearly laid down the procedure for Talaq. The husband who has determined to divorce his wife may announce the words of divorce during the period of her cleanness and not during the period of her menstruation. After the announcement of such words, the husband may separate the woman from his bed although she must be allowed to continue living in the house of her husband till the expiry of the Iddah for Talaq. God said:

O Prophet! When ye do divorce women, divorce them at their prescribed periods, and count (accurately), their prescribed periods: And fear Allah your Lord: **and turn them not out of their houses, nor shall they (themselves) leave**, except in case they are guilty of some open lewdness, those are limits set by Allah: and any who transgresses the limits of Allah, does verily wrong his (own) soul: thou knowest not if perchance Allah will bring about thereafter some new situation.⁴⁸¹

In the event that the husband and the wife resume their conjugal relations during the first month of Talaq, the Talaq becomes ineffective. In case there is no reconciliation within first 30 days, the husband will have to repeat the words of Talaq to his wife. Again the wife will continue to live in the house of her husband without sharing his bed. On completion of the second month after the first notice of Talaq, the husband and wife will enjoy another 30 days before the final dissolution of marriage. Even during the said third month the husband and wife have good chances of reconciliation either through their arbiters or their own inclination towards each other. In case they incline towards reconciliation during the third month, they will be required to go through the ritual of Nikah again before resuming their conjugal relations. At the expiry of the third month, however, the marriage will stand dissolved. God says:

Divorced women shall wait concerning themselves for three monthly periods. Nor is it lawful for them to hide what Allah Hath created in their wombs, if they have faith in Allah and the Last Day. And their husbands have the better right to take them back in that period, if they wish for reconciliation (...).⁴⁸²

The period of Iddah after Talaq, therefore, aims at determining whether they were pregnant or not. The

⁴⁸¹ Ibid, 65:1 Yusuf Ali.

⁴⁸² Ibid, 2:228 Yusuf Ali.

women must not therefore, hide the true position to avoid confusion about the lineage of children born to them.

In addition to the above, the Qur'an also enjoined that:

A divorce is only permissible twice: after that, the parties should either hold Together on equitable terms, or separate with kindness.⁴⁸³

According to Islamic Traditions, therefore, one can divorce a woman only twice. He has to communicate to his wife verbally or in writing that "I divorce you". As such the first Talaq should be during such clean period of woman in which the husband might not have touched her. After pronouncing Talaq, the husband may separate his wife from his bed but allow her to live in the same house till the expiry of one month. In case he turns to her during this period, the divorce becomes ineffectual. Alternatively, on expiry of the first month, the husband can again repeat the words divorcing his wife for the second time. The wife will, however, continue to live in the house of her husband. The man can take his wife back even till expiry of the second notice i.e. up to 60 days from the announcement of the first divorce. Both husband and wife have another 30 days to take a final decision in the matter. Meanwhile arbiters; one from the side of the woman, the wife and the other from the side of husband will try to make reconciliation between them. on failure of their reconciliatory efforts, the divorce will be finalized on the completion of 90 days from the first utterance of the words of Talaq. On dissolution of marriage as stated above, the husbands are enjoined by the Lord to depart from their divorced wives in a nice manner as enjoined by the Lord.

It is not lawful for you, (Men), to take back any of your gifts (from your wives), except when both parties fear that they would be unable to keep the limits ordained by Allah. If ye (judges) do indeed fear that they would be unable to keep the limits ordained by Allah, there is no blame on either of them if she give something for her freedom. These are the limits ordained by Allah; so do not transgress them if any do transgress the limits ordained by Allah, such persons wrong (Themselves as well as others). So if a husband divorces his wife (irrevocably), He cannot, after that, re-marry her until

⁴⁸³ Ibid, 2:229 (Yusuf Ali).

after she has married another husband and He has divorced her. In that case there is no blame on either of them if they re-unite, provided they feel that they can keep the limits ordained by Allah. Such are the limits ordained by Allah, which He makes plain to those who understand. When ye divorce women, and they fulfil the term of their ('Iddat), either take them back on equitable terms or set them free on equitable terms; but do not take them back to injure them, (or) to take undue advantage; if any one does that; He wrongs his own soul. Do not treat Allah's Signs as a jest, but solemnly rehearse Allah's favours on you, and the fact that He sent down to you the Book and Wisdom, for your instruction. And fear Allah, and know that Allah is well acquainted with all things. When ye divorce women, and they fulfill the term of their ('Iddah), do not prevent them from marrying their (former) husbands, if they mutually agree on equitable terms. This instruction is for all amongst you, who believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is (the course Making for) most virtue and purity amongst you and Allah knows, and ye know not.⁴⁸⁴

Islam Reforms the Law of Torah

According to Torah a woman can marry another husband after her Talaq from the first one. In case she gets Talaq even from her second husband or in the event of his death, the woman cannot remarry her first husband. She becomes defiled and abominated before the LORD.

And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; **Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife,** after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.⁴⁸⁵

Islam retains the law of Torah to the extent that a divorced woman cannot remarry her former husband after the finalization of their dissolution. The divorced woman, however, can marry another man of her choice. In case the 2nd husband also divorces her of his own free will or dies, she can marry any other man. This also includes her former

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid, 2:229-232 (Yusuf Ali).

⁴⁸⁵ Deu 24:1-4 KJV.

husband whom she can remarry with his consent. This is so because after the divorce or death of another husband the woman becomes like other women who could be married by her former husband. The reformation is more beneficial to women than to men. May be the divorced woman had left her former children with her first husband. In such a case both the former husband and the wife may be realizing their fault for ill-feelings and neglect of their children. In case of her remarriage to the former husband, she may be able to have her children with her. Islam, therefore, enjoins that:

So if a husband divorces his wife (irrevocably), He cannot, after that, re-marry her until after she has married another husband and He has divorced her. In that case there is no blame on either of them if they re-unite, provided they feel that they can keep the limits ordained by Allah. Such are the limits ordained by Allah, which He makes plain to those who understand.⁴⁸⁶

Condemnation of Divorcee or a Widow

The widows and divorced women have been despised throughout the world. The Law of Moses too gave no relief to them. It rather disgraced them through an assertion as quoted below:

A priest shall not marry a woman who has been a prostitute or a woman who is not a virgin or who is divorced; he is holy. The people must consider the priest holy, because he presents the food offerings to me. I am the LORD; I am holy and I make my people holy.⁴⁸⁷

We have already observed that the mention of widows or the divorcees along with prostitutes destroys the sanctification of the marriage as enjoined by the Lord. The Jews, the Christians, the Hindus and many other communities in the world consider the widows and the divorcees as despicable and defiled as prostitutes. Since, the priests are holy people, the marriage of divorcees or widows is incompatible with their holiness. **The Holy Prophet ﷺ, therefore, took a bold step to eradicate the misconception by repeatedly marrying the**

⁴⁸⁶ Al-Qur'an 2:230 Yusuf Ali.

⁴⁸⁷ Lev 21:7-8 GNB.

women who had been divorced or widowed once twice or thrice before their marriage with the Prophet ﷺ. Such repeated marriages of the Holy Prophet

ﷺ not only provided shelter to the helpless women and their children but also restored the status and sanctity of women who haply became widows or who were divorced by their husbands for reasons other than infidelity of those women. As such, Islam has totally eradicated the concept of defilement or hatred against the divorced women and the widows.

It is, however, strange that the Leviticus has held the holiness of priests higher than the holiness of the prophets and the Almighty. In the Ezekiel ch. 23, the Lord himself marries Ahola and Aholiba the two sinful sisters who were prostitutes. Similarly, in Hosea 1:2 the Lord advised the Prophet to:

Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD.⁴⁸⁸

Again we find in Hosea that:

Then said the LORD unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine.⁴⁸⁹

Although the quotations given above might be taken as parables yet they are incompatible with the holiness of the Lord and Prophet Hosea. As compared to the above, one finds no dirty parable in the Qur'an. The Lord has clearly asserted that:

Women impure are for men impure, and men impure for women impure and women of purity are for men of purity, and men of purity are for women of purity: these are not affected by what people say: for them there is forgiveness, and a provision honourable.⁴⁹⁰

Perhaps the underlining idea in Leviticus (21:7) is that sex is a pollution and spiritual excellence cannot be attained without refraining from sex. Virginity or celibacy is, therefore, the superior mode of living to attain holiness and

⁴⁸⁸ Hos 1:2 KJV.

⁴⁸⁹ Hos 3:1 KJV.

⁴⁹⁰ Al-Qur'an 24:26 Yusuf Ali.

salvation. The misconception is based merely on the thinking of the mystics or sages of the old. The concept has no support from any commandment of the Lord. The Lord had himself created the pair for Adam and the first blessings of the Lord after their creation reflects married life and procreation of children not only as a blessing but as the first duty enjoined on humankind.⁴⁹¹

Almost all the prophets of the lord had been marrying and procreating children during their lives. Usually they have been marrying at the age of 40 years or more provided they had a settled life and the means of sustenance. It is, therefore, entirely wrong to think that sex under lawful marriage creates any pollution or un-chastity to a man or woman. Virginity only has a plus point for marriage because of the early age and personal charms of a woman. As regards sanctity or holiness, it has no edge over the married women even if they become divorcees or the widows. As regards chastity, only the Levites had elevated themselves in holiness over the married women. According to the Qur'an the wife of the Pharaoh and Miriam the daughter of Imran had been the most exalted women among mankind. Among them, the first one was married and the second one a virgin giving birth to Jesus Christ miraculously. God said:

وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
 اِمْرَاةً فِرْعَوْنَ اِذْ قَالَتْ رَبِّ ابْنِ
 لِي عِنْدَكَ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَنَجِّنِي
 مِّنْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَعَمَلِهٖ وَنَجِّنِي مِّنَ
 الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِيْنَ (١١) وَمَرْيَمَ
 ابْنَتْ عِمْرَانَ الَّتِي أَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا
 فَنَفَخْنَا فِيْهِ مِنْ رُّوحِنَا وَصَدَّقْتَ
 بِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّهَا وَكُتِبَ عَلَيْهَا
 الْقَانِتِيْنَ (١٢)

11. and Allah sets forth, As an example to those who believe

⁴⁹¹ Gen 1:28 KJV.

the wife of Pharaoh: behold she said: "O My Lord! build for me, In nearness to thee, a mansion In the garden, and save me from Pharaoh and His doings, and save me from those that do wrong"; 12. and Mary the daughter of 'Imran, who guarded Her chastity; and we breathed into (her body) of Our spirit; and she testified to the truth of the words of Her Lord and of His Revelations, and was one of the devout (servants).⁴⁹²

The Holy Prophet ﷺ also added Khadijah and Fatemah in the list. It has been reported that:

The Messenger of Allaah ﷺ drew four lines on the ground, then he said, "Do you know what this is?" We said, "Allah and His Messenger know best." The Messenger of Allah said: "The best of the women of Paradise are Khadijah bint Khuwaylid, Faatimah bint Muhammad, Aasiyah bint Mazaahim the wife of Pharaoh, and Miriam bint 'Imran."⁴⁹³

Except for Miriam who had miraculously given birth to Jesus Christ as we find in the scriptures, the other three were married women serving their husbands as per law of the Lord and prevailing customs of the time. Virginity or celibacy, therefore, does not confer any additional sanctity on a man or a woman.

It was perhaps to remove the slur of pollution or profanity from the widowed or divorced women that with the exception of Ayesha, the Holy Prophet ﷺ chose all his wives from the widows or the divorced women. There is no record that any other prophet before him had married a widow or a divorcee. **Islam was, therefore, the first religion to remove any restriction on the holy men to marry the widows or the divorcees.** While the Law of Moses (Lev 21:7) was a disgrace for the widows or the divorced women in the world irrespective of their godliness, chastity or nobility, the Holy Prophet ﷺ removed the slur of all pollution or profanity from the married women in the world. He being the final and the greatest prophet as well as highest priest of the Lord on earth married the widows and the divorced women primarily to remove the stigma of profanity or pollution from them. Women, therefore, do not lose any part of their holiness or chastity through marriage, divorce or widowhood. **This had been one of the**

⁴⁹² Al-Qur'an 66:11-12.

⁴⁹³ *Musnad of Imaam Ahmad*, Hadith Number 2663 and it's Saheeh.

greatest reforms to restore the status and chastity of the women who were suffering from the death of their husbands or from the divorce. Besides this, the Qur'an as well as the traditions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ advised the believers to marry provided they could afford to do so. Sex within the married life had blessings of the Lord. It also earns a reward from the Almighty:

Abu Dharr reported: some of the people from among the Companions of the Apostle of Allah said to him: Messenger of Allah, the rich have taken away (air the) reward. They observe prayer as we do; they keep the fasts as we keep, and they give Sadaqa out of their surplus riches. Upon this he (the Holy Prophet) said: Has Allah not prescribed for you (a course) by following which you can (also) do sadaqa? In every declaration of the glorification of Allah (i.e. saying Subhan Allah) there is a Sadaqa, and every Takbir (i.e. saying Allah-O-Akbar) is a sadaqa, and every praise of His (saying al-Hamdu Lillah) is a Sadaqa and every declaration that He is One (La illha ill-Allah) is a sadaqa, and enjoining of good is a sadaqa, and forbidding of that which is evil is a Sadaqa, and **in man's sexual Intercourse (with his wife,) there is a Sadaqa. They (the Companions) said: Messenger of Allah, is there reward for him who satisfies his sexual passion among us? He said: Tell me, if he were to devote it to something forbidden, would it not be a sin on his part?** Similarly, if he were to devote it to something lawful, he should have a reward.⁴⁹⁴

Islam also counts sex by believers with their wives among the rights of women in the same manner they make it binding on women to satisfy the sexual needs of their husbands. To live singly or avoiding sex as advised by St. Paul (Cor 7:8-9 RSV, 1 Cor 7:26-28 RSV, 1 Cor 7:29 and 31-33 GNB) is an arrogant violation of the commandments of the Almighty. Except for the writings of St. Paul and his followers we find no reward in any of the scriptures for those who live a monastic life or live abstemiously. Some people try to make futile efforts to become angels while the Lord created them as human beings male as well as females. Their test and trial on earth will be made keeping in view the natural faculties, requirements and duties assigned to them by the Lord. Living like angels has nowhere been commanded or appreciated by the Lord.

⁴⁹⁴ *Sahih Muslim*, Chapter 16 Book 5, Hadith Number 2198.

CONCUBINAGE

Concubinage

The institution of concubinage also exists since pre-historic times. According to the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, concubinage was common among the ancient people of the East. *"Among the Babylonians, the code of Hammurabi shows the conditions of its existence about 2285 B.C. (...) Slave concubines were entirely at the mercy of their masters whose right over them was absolute, and the begetting of children by their master was desired rather than otherwise."*⁴⁹⁵ The Encyclopedia defines concubinage in the following manner:

Concubinage may be defined as the more or less **permanent cohabitation (outside the true marriage bond)** of a man with a woman or women, who usually form part of his household, and whose position may be that of secondary wives, women bought, acquired by gift, or captured in war, or domestic slaves. **Captive women are generally made household slaves, and are not always necessarily concubines**, but, where concubinage is recognized, they can hardly fail to become concubines, cohabitation with them on the part of the father or sons being occasional or habitual. In some cases they are made wives, legal or secondary, though it is sometimes illegal to marry a slave. The female servants of a wife may become the husband's concubines, though usually only with her permission. In these various forms concubinage has had a well-nigh universal range, yet there are exceptions.⁴⁹⁶

According to Lecky:

The word concubine also, which in the republic had the same signification as among ourselves, represented in the empire a strictly legal union **an innovation which was chiefly due to Augustus, and was doubtless intended as part of the legislation against celibacy**, and also, it may be, as a corrective of the licentious habits that were general. This union was in essentials simply a form of marriage, **for he who, having a concubine, took to himself either a wife or another concubine, was legally guilty of adultery.**

⁴⁹⁵ *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. III, p. 811. 'Concubinage'.

⁴⁹⁶ *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. III,, p. 809. 'Concubinage'.

Like the commonest form of marriage, it was consummated without any ceremony, and was dissoluble at will. Its peculiarities were that **it was contracted between men of patrician rank and freedwomen, who were forbidden by law to intermarry,**⁴⁹⁷ that the concubine, though her position was perfectly recognised and honourable, did not share the rank of her partner, that she brought no dowry, and that her children followed her rank, and were excluded from the rank and the inheritance of their father.⁴⁹⁸

Over a passage of time since the earlier periods of Islam, similar vices also crept in certain wealthy Muslims with lax morals. Although their number had always been extremely negligible, yet the vice could never be eliminated entirely from the society. **Some of the unscrupulous Muslims resorted to buying or hiring women belonging to destitute families of any religion in the world to keep them under their custody openly or secretly for copulation with them.** Such women had no assurance to be raised to the regular status of a wife. The malpractice has always been condemned by ordinary Muslims as well as jurists among them. **Instead of recognizing cohabitation with the keeps (without Nikaah) as a lawful system, Islamic jurists take it as fornication punishable under the Muslim Law.** No one can cohabit with a woman without Nikaah or in case of a captive woman without her due allotment to some individual by the Caliph, Emir or Commander of the Muslim Armies. Even in this case jurists have different opinions. Majority believes that there should be no cohabitation without the Nikaah even with the captive of war. In case of Maria the Copt who had been gifted to the Holy Prophet ﷺ by Al-Muqawqis the governor of Egypt, the Prophet ﷺ married her with her consent before any sexual relations with her. The Holy

⁴⁹⁷ It is strange to observe that those who were legally forbidden to intermarry free women could abuse them under the cover of concubines. As such, all that was forbidden to the patrician ranks through law was made lawful by them only by avoiding the marriage. Sex under marriage was, therefore, the only source of sin for the patrician ranks. By avoiding the Lawful marriage, they enjoyed the liberty to keep free women as their concubines besides abusing many of the confessors among women and the children. We, however, find no scriptural or apostolic authority for free sex practiced by them.

⁴⁹⁸ Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, pp. 370-371.

Prophet ﷺ himself did not have an intercourse with any of the captives of war unless she had accepted Islam and agreed to marry the Prophet ﷺ.

Unluckily, most of the non-Muslims and especially the orientalist hold that Islam did not put any restriction on the number of concubines. They, therefore, allege the Muslims with promiscuity and sensuality. Even some laymen among the Muslims believe in that way. To support their view, they refer to the instances of large number of maid servants serving in the Harems of the later time caliphs, Sultans, Kings, Nawabs or wealthy merchants among the Muslims. We, however, find no precepts of Islam to allow innumerable concubines to open the way towards licentiousness. It is, however, the Bible that has the instances of the Prophets and others, including many wives and concubines of King David (2Sam 5:13) and 700 wives of King Solomon with about 300 concubines (1Ki. 11:1-4). Similarly, King Rehoboam son of Solomon took 18 wives and threescore concubines. Abijah son of Rehoboam also had 14 wives. Hence, to have innumerable wives and concubines had been the legacy of the OT than any new law introduced by the Qur'an.

From the very beginning, Islam had been bent upon manumission of slaves and abolishing different sources of slavery. Citizens of a country or city conquered by the Muslims could not be enslaved in any case. Only the active participants in a war against the Muslims could be captured from the battlefield and brought to the Emir of the Army. It was unlawful for any member of the Muslim army to rape or molest any of the women captured in the war. Only the Emir had the authority to release some or all of the captives as a gesture of good will. Others could be released against payment of ransom or in exchange with the Muslim captives of war with the enemy. The remainder, therefore, could always be a negligible percentage as compared to the number of the Army personnel. As such, only two or three percent of the participants in war could hope to get a woman captive of war. All other sources of obtaining slaves being closed, the ordinary Muslims hardly had a chance to obtain a slave or a slave girl. The masters were enjoined to

look after them in the manner they looked after the members of their own family.

The Orientalists in the modern times take special pleasure in reviling the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his followers for polygamy and concubinage which they interpret as licentiousness. We, however, observe that all such accusations are based on prejudice and perversion of facts. Besides this, the Christian writers also set aside the contents, the teachings and traditions of their prophets⁴⁹⁹ as recorded in the OT. They also ignore the entire history of the world before and after the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Such concealment of facts, therefore, helps them to spread disinformation about the teaching of the Qur'an and the traditions as well as practice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

The Origin of Concubinage

The fact is that the institution of slavery prevailed in the world from time immemorial. Concubinage as a corollary of slavery has also been coexisting with it. Leaving all other people in the world, we may highlight that the Israelites were enslaved soon after the death of Joseph and **they remained under slavery in Egypt for about 450 years.** Even subsequently, slavery of the Israelites or other nations in the Middle East and other parts of the world did not end except for short intervals before or after the death of Jesus Christ. Concubinage as a byproduct of slavery also prevailed throughout the world. It was common in Assyria and Arabia. The *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* records that:

Among the early Arabs, captives taken in war became the wives or the concubines of their captors; but, even in Muhammad's time if they bore their master a child they could

⁴⁹⁹ For a ready reference, the readers may consult Deu 21:10-14. It is worth noting here that the Muslim law does not allow any humiliation such as shaving the head of a woman captive of war. It also does not suggest any transient sex relationship with such women. Any issue from a Muslim master will be treated as a true heir of his father. Similarly, after getting a child from the master the woman gets the status of Umm e Walad with an entitlement towards freedom. She can neither be sold nor exchanged or transferred to others. In case she is not freed during the life of her master she will be automatically free on his death.

not be sold or ransomed. Probably their children were then free born and legitimate. In earlier times, however, and in the case of negro slave women, the children were slaves.⁵⁰⁰

The captives of war had always been the primary source of concubinage. Prior to Islam, raids used to be undertaken with a special view of obtaining men or women as slaves. Another common source had been the purchase of women or girls from the poor parents who either failed to repay their debts or were forced by the adverse circumstances to sell their daughters/ sisters etc. Islam strictly forbade enslaving the free people either by purchase or some other method. A very small number of concubines consisted of the women gifted to certain kings, nobilities or other dignitaries. Although some of the Hebrews and other people belonging to higher classes also had to sell their children to repay their debts or to meet some urgency yet most of the persons sold as slaves belonged to the families of lower ranks. Women among the slaves were liable to become concubines who were often subjected to gross indignities. Islam, therefore, proscribed all sources of concubinage except women captive of war or those who were house born slaves with the believers. Except for the captives of war, Islam banned all other sources of acquiring slaves or the concubines.

The earliest recorded sanction of the concubinage can be found in the Hebrew Laws as quoted below:

When the LORD your God gives you victory in battle and you take prisoners, you may see among them a beautiful woman that you like and want to marry. Take her to your home, where she will shave her head, cut her fingernails, and change her clothes. She is to stay in your home and mourn for her parents for a month; after that, you may marry her.⁵⁰¹ Later, if you no longer want her, you are to let her go free. Since you forced her to have intercourse with you, you cannot treat her

⁵⁰⁰ *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. III, p. 812. 'Concubinage'. In Islam, however, the children born from Negro slave women were also free born children and enjoyed parity of rights with other offsprings of their father.

⁵⁰¹ The Old Testament, therefore, counts only 30 days to make a captive of war as one's wife irrespective of the fact that she may be already pregnant. As against this, Islam insists on cleanliness of woman from the menses and if pregnant till her cleanliness after delivering the child.

as a slave and sell her.⁵⁰²

Jesus was born during such an era when elimination of slavery and equality of human rights could only be preached at the pain of death. Instead of introducing reforms to end slavery, therefore, he was content with teaching the passivity to the slaves by advising them to obey their masters.

Slavery and concubinage, therefore, continued to prevail throughout the world during the interim period between Jesus and Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Most of the countries in the world including the great powers like the Roman and the Persian Empires had been waging wars against each other. The Army of the conquerors used to enslave men and women of the defeated country. All citizens of the conquered lands were treated as captives of war and the conquerors could kill them on the spot or enslave them for their own use or to transport them to far off places to be sold in the slave markets there. Females usually served as concubines of the victors who retained them as long as they pleased or sold them as concubines to others. People of the vanquished lands had, therefore, been the main source of slavery and concubinage for the conquerors.

Islam was the first religion to preach universal brotherhood of the humankind. Hence, it aimed at freedom and equality of the fundamental rights of all the descendants of Adam and Eve. Although slavery and concubinage were at variance with the spirit of Islam yet being an international issue, it was impossible to resolve it without corresponding response from other nations engaging against each other. One-sided elimination of slavery on the part of any nation would have failed miserably unless other nations reciprocated to the reform with the same enlightened spirit.

Keeping in view the universal existence of slavery and concubinage in the world, it was not expedient for the Muslims to ban this evil forthwith. Islam, therefore, introduced various reforms to curtail slavery and to eliminate concubinage progressively from the society. It prohibited Muslims to enslave any free person, even in the

⁵⁰² Deu 21:10-14 GNB.

territory conquered by them. Narrated Abu Hurayrah that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

"Allah says, 'I will be against three persons on the Day of Resurrection: 1. One who makes a covenant in My Name, but he proves treacherous. 2. One who sells a free person (as a slave) and eats the price, 3. And one who employs a laborer and gets the full work done by him but does not pay him his wages.'⁵⁰³

With the exception of captives of war arrested from the battlefield, other citizens of the vanquished nation would be free in the shape of Dhimmis in the Muslim state.

Islam also imposed a ban on different sources of slavery with the only exception of men or women captured from the battlefield. There was no provision to enslave other citizens who had not taken active part in the war. The LORD revealed to the Muslims that:

It is not fitting for a prophet that he should have prisoners of war until he hath thoroughly subdued the land. Ye look for the temporal goods of this world; but Allah looketh to the Hereafter: And Allah is Exalted in might, Wise.⁵⁰⁴

The verse quoted above, therefore, seems to prohibit taking other people as prisoners of war or slaves except after thoroughly subduing the land. There is no mention in Islam to take people as prisoners or slaves from any other source. Instead of calling the captives of war as slaves, the Lord had termed them as **Usara i.e. prisoners**. The Qur'an mentioned these captives as '**ma-malakat-aymanukum**'. *Surah al-Nisa* starts with the following verses:

4/1 O mankind! reverence your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, His mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women;- reverence Allah, through whom ye demand your mutual (rights), and (reverence) the wombs (That bore you): for Allah ever watches over you. 4/2 To orphans restore their property (When they reach their age),nor substitute (your) worthless things for (their) good ones; and devour not their substance (by mixing it up) with your won. For this is indeed a great sin. 4/3 If ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly with the orphans, Marry women of your choice, Two or three

⁵⁰³ *Sahih Bukhari*, Volume 3, Book 34, Hadith Number 430:

⁵⁰⁴ Al-Qur'an 8:67 (Yusuf Ali).

or four; but if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one, or (a captive) that your right hands possess, that will be more suitable, to prevent you from doing injustice.⁵⁰⁵

Different exegetes have interpreted '*ma malakat-aymanukum*' as 'that which your right hands possess'. This could also imply unlimited number of women captives-of-war with whom one could copulate. Others hold that permission to marry women's of one's choice is general and not particular only for the orphans or the captives of war. They believe that limitation of four wives is universal covering orphans, free women or captives of war. According to them, limit of four wives cannot be exceeded in any case.⁵⁰⁶ Some of them agree that the jurists during the time of later caliphs, kings or Sultans behaving as despots could not afford to impose a check on the multiplicity of women or concubines most of which were not captives of war women purchased from the market by the kings or the rich people among the Muslims.

Subsequent to the verses quoted above, we find another revelation as quoted below:

Also (prohibited are) women already married, except those whom your right hands possess: Thus hath Allah ordained (Prohibitions) against you: Except for these, all others are lawful, provided ye seek (them in marriage) with gifts from your property, - **desiring chastity, not lust**, seeing that ye derive benefit from them, give them their dowers (at least) as prescribed; but if, after a dower is prescribed, agree Mutually (to vary it), there is no blame on you, and Allah is All-knowing, All-wise.⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid, 4:1-3 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁰⁶ In this respect, it is important to go through the exposition of Some modern writers such as Allama Asad, *The Message of the Qur'an* (Gibraltar: Dar-alAndalus, 1980). While translating and exposing Ayah 3 of Surah 4, of the Qur'an (p. 191), he insists that number of wives must not exceed 4 whether they are free women or originally slaves. According to him Muhammad Abduhu of Egypt also understood the verse in the same meanings. There are many other writers like Yusuf Abbas in his book '*Laoundi*' published by Rational Publications, Lahore, 2014. For further details please also study Ghulam Ahmed Parvez, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, and Mufti Muhammad Shafi in his '*Ma'arif-ul-Qur'an*' (Urdu) Vol. 2, under exposition of Surah 4:3, p. 394.

⁵⁰⁷ Al-Qur'an 4:24 (Yusuf Ali). The term محصنين means 'desiring chastity' while غير مسافحين means 'not desiring lust'. It is, therefore, evident

Normally Muslims cannot marry a woman who had a living spouse. The said law stands amended for the captives of war whose husbands had been left in the belligerent territory.

Exposition of ‘Ma Malakat-Aymanukum’

Although some light had already been thrown on the subject in the preceding paragraphs yet it needs to be further elaborated in the following. The Almighty said:

O Prophet! We have made lawful to thee thy wives to whom thou hast paid their dowers; and those whom thy right hand possesses out of the prisoners of war whom Allah has assigned to thee (...).⁵⁰⁸

The translation of the first part of the verse quoted above clearly identifies the persons who fall under the term *ما ملكت إيمانكم* ‘*Ma Malakat Aymanukum*’ i.e. the prisoners of war whom Allah has assigned to the Prophet or his followers.

In the verses i.e. 4:22-23, quoted earlier, the Qur'an had enumerated certain categories of women who cannot be married by the Muslims. The above mentioned verses referred to particular relationships of those women with the believers. Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi, therefore rendered the translation of verse 4:24 in the following words:

And also forbidden are the wedded among women, save those whom your right hands own Allah's rescript for you. And allowed unto you is whatsoever is beyond that, so that ye may seek them with your substances as properly wedded men, not as fornicators. Then whomsoever of them ye have enjoyed, give them their dowers stipulated. And there will be no blame on you in regard to aught on which ye mutually agree after the stipulation; verily Allah is Knowing, Wise.⁵⁰⁹

from this verse that the Almighty had given the relaxation of marrying up to four women whether free or slaves so that you may derive benefits like getting children, having better political contacts, or some financial benefits etc. As such, marriages aiming merely to gratify your lusts do not fulfil the purpose of the relaxation. Anyhow, if you feel that you will be able to be chaster by marrying some woman you have the permission for the same.

⁵⁰⁸ Al-Qur'an 33:50 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁰⁹ Al-Qur'an 4:24, Abdul Majid Daryabadi.

It is evident from the above that Islam forbids Muslims to marry the wedded women among them. The only exceptions are مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ, meaning 'save those whom your right hands possess' i.e. the women captives of war allotted to the individual Muslims. As such, wedding the married women among the captives who had left their spouses in the enemy territory were not prohibited to the Muslims provided they wait until their cleanliness after delivering the child or cleanliness from their menses occurring sometime after their captivity. For comparison with the law in Torah, the readers may go through Deuteronomy 21:10-14. In his comments pertaining to the verse, Maulana Daryabadi writes that:

2- This repudiates the extreme communist doctrine that, within the community, every woman may be the wife of every man, and any man could cohabit with any woman, as also the custom in many savage tribes of lending and exchanging wives. 'The custom of lending wives is well-nigh universal among savages', though for different reasons. Westermarck frequently refers to 'the custom of lending wives being found among many peoples in different parts of the world' (*Short History of Marriage*, p. 14). حصن originally signifies a fortress, and محصنات means, in the first instance, only 'women who are fortified or fenced in.' المحصنات, in the context, signifies married women, or women having husbands. **The word strongly suggests the idea of chastity and purity.**

3- (as slaves). مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ, literally 'those whom your right hands possess,' signifies in the context, 'such married women as shall come in your possession as prisoners of war,' – war being the chief source of the acquisition of slaves, male and female. Such women, when not taken back on payment of ransom or otherwise, are to be lawful as wives, even though their previous marriage has not been formally dissolved, – religious warfare in itself being sufficient to sever previous ties. **According to the Hanafi school of law it is not lawful to take such women as wives whose husbands also are captured, or are in slavery with them.** A bondwoman must at the time of her capture be an unbeliever. 'Though the creation of the status of slavery is a public right, once it has been brought about, it becomes transmitted into a private right in the nature of property. Hence though a Muslim cannot be made a slave, yet if an infidel slave becomes Muslim, he still remains a slave, for otherwise the proprietary

rights of the master would be affected.⁵¹⁰

In his exposition to the phrase 'not as fornicators', the expositor comments that:

This rules out as un-Islamic all forms of temporary and 'companionate' marriages where lust is the sole motive.

'Real satisfaction,' says an American observer, 'comes not from mere sexual experience but from a relationship which is lasting and continuous and which is built on feeling of affection, devotion and tenderness (Pollens, *'The Sex Criminal'*, p. 196).⁵¹¹

Some among the Christian missionaries, scholars and orientalists have bitterly criticized Qur'an and Islam about the teachings of slavery. Occasionally, we find them perverting the facts than presenting truth to their readers. Here is one of the instances:

In another way also a Mohammedan may really have more than four wives,' and yet keep within the law. This is by means of living with concubines, which the Koran expressly permits. In that Surah which allows four wives, the words are added, "or the slaves which ye shall have acquired." Then, in the 70th Surah, it is revealed that it is no sin to live with slaves. The very words are: "The slaves which their right hands possess, as to them they shall be blameless."⁵¹²

The Christian missionaries and the critics must note carefully that in Islam there is no provision of sex with women whether slaves or free without Nikaah i.e. the marriage bond. There can be no sex between the genders without lawful marriage which binds the male to take all responsibilities of his sex with the female. Female, as such, will be well protected and safe from any libel or slander. She also has the right to claim her own sustenance and all the provisions for the child born out of sex with a Muslim believer in case the male deserts the woman. No believer enjoys freedom to rape a woman or to have sex with her even with her willingness. The main difference between the Christian world and the Muslim is that men in the western

⁵¹⁰ *Commentary of Al-Qur'an* 4:24 by Abdul Majid Daryabadi, Vol. I (Karachi: Darul-Ishaat, Urdu Bazar, 1991), footnote no. 2-3, p. 317-318,

⁵¹¹ *Commentary of Al-Qur'an* 4:24 by Abdul Majid Daryabadi, Vol. I, footnote no. 7, p. 318,

⁵¹² John J. Pool, p. 34-35.

world cannot be prosecuted for having sex with any woman without Nikaah just after obtaining her willingness. The male has no responsibility of the woman or the children born to her. It is, therefore, a tragic position for the woman in case of abortion or life-long problem to rear the offspring herself. Such a child will remain fatherless forever. By insisting on Nikaah and suggesting extreme punishments to the fornicators, Islam has provided a haven of peace, security and respectable status to the women throughout the world.

Even in the case of war, Muslim armies never enjoyed freedom to have sex with any woman they found in the conquered land. Such women could only be Dhimmi than slaves and their position except for political liberty remained unchanged. Dhimmi in fact became the responsibility of the Muslims to provide them protection and justice from all sorts of atrocities and freedom to observe the religion they followed. Islam prohibits converting anyone from some other religion to Islam by coercion (Al-Qur'an 2:256). The precepts of Islam can, however, be presented to the infidels yet Muslims or the Dhimmis get no advantage at all by forceful conversion. Only those persons can derive benefit from conversion to Islam who are convinced at their heart that Islam is the true religion of the Almighty leading them to salvation in the hereafter.

The Muslim history bears evidence to the fact that as a general rule, Muslim armies kept their passions under strict control and there had been no rapes or collection of women for personal use in them. If any women were captured from the battlefield they would be brought to the Emir like other booties of war. Only the Emir had the power to free them or to retain them in accordance with the circumstances prevailing at the time. Such captured women would normally remain chaste in the Muslim custody. Some of them would be ransomed against money while others could be exchanged with the Muslim women prisoners with the infidels. Only the few that could not get their release in any case can be allotted by the emir to certain persons in the Army who could either marry them with their willingness or keep them just like handmaids without even touching them. **No other nation has ever shown such a high moral standard about the captured women in the world.** Even the Christian critics never blamed rapes of

women as the Christians have been doing in each and every city whether Muslim, Jew or the Christian during the crusades. In our book *'Slavery and Human Rights through the Ages'*, we have gone into detail to describe Christian characteristics about the women in the lands conquered by them. The study of the number of women involved and the cruelest treatment to which they had been subjected frequently would be enough to differentiate the Muslim morals from those prevalent in Christendom.

People like John J. Pool have quoted from Muir that:

At the present day, as in days past, in multitudes of Mohammedan "homes, slaves are found; and as Muir says, in his *"Life of Mahomet,"* "so long as this unlimited permission of living with their female slaves continues, it cannot be expected that there will be any hearty attempt to put a stop to slavery in Mohammedan countries." **Thus the Koran, in this matter of slavery, is the enemy of mankind. And women, as usual, are the greatest sufferers.**⁵¹³

The remarks quoted above depict one of the worst perversions of facts. Both Muir⁵¹⁴ and John J. Pool must have been aware of the cruelest treatment of the Israelites with the vanquished nations under guidance of the O.T. For further details, please refer to our book *Slavery and Human Rights through the Ages*, chapter 3 s.v: *The Atrocities of the Israelites*. A short reference to fall of Jericho can be quoted as example of the same:

Fall of Jericho: The Israelites besieged the city of Jericho for 7 days when its walls collapsed miraculously.

21. With their swords they killed everyone in the city, men and women, young and old. They also killed the cattle, sheep, and donkeys. (...) **24.** Then they set fire to the city and burned it to the ground, along with everything in it, except the things made of gold, silver, bronze, and iron, which they took and put in the LORD's treasury.⁵¹⁵

Other instances quoted by us pertained to the Canaanites at Hormah, King Og of Bashan Holy War against Midian, City of Ai, everlasting slavery of Gibeonites, capture of five

⁵¹³ John J. Pool, p. 34-35.

⁵¹⁴ Sir William Muir, (1819 –1905) was a Scottish Orientalist, scholar of Islam, and colonial administrator.

⁵¹⁵ Jos 6:21 and 24 GNB.

Amorite Kings and capture of Amorite territory. All these atrocities had been committed under the directions of the Lord contained in the Exodus. The same Law of Moses (عليه السلام) remained unchanged even during the times of Jesus Christ. One can, therefore, do nothing except laughing at the hypocrisy of the Christian missionaries like William Muir and John J. Pool who blindfold themselves to pass over the contents of the Old Testament and spit their venom on the Qur'an. It is perhaps about such people that Jesus had uttered that:

Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel
(Mat 23:24).

Skipping over many other details, we may refer to 400 years long slavery of men and women in the countries colonized by them augmented with hundreds of millions of slaves captured from the African continent. For details please refer to our book '*Slavery and Human Rights Through the Ages*' (2017).

It is, therefore, absolutely incorrect that '*the Koran in the matter of slavery, is the enemy of mankind*'. Had there been a grain of truth in their writings they should have quoted the relevant verses of the Qur'an proving it as enemy of mankind. Their untruth, therefore, reflects severely on the integrity of such scholars. The fact is that Qur'an not only exhorted Muslims to free the slaves on one account or the other but also to treat them nicely like their own kith and kin. We have discussed the matter in our book mentioned earlier.

Muslims never acted like brutes or sex perverts during any fight against the European or other nations in the world. As against this, the Christian West had no morals even up to the end of 2nd World War where we find horrible stories of raping millions and millions of women/girls from 8 to 80 years in Austria, Germany and other vanquished lands. While going through the records of such events during the WW I and II one hardly believes that there were any human beings among the winners. As against this, Islam had strictly forbidden the Muslims from rape or molestation of the women in the countries ever conquered by them. Women in the vanquished nations become Dhimmi as soon as the enemy surrenders before the Muslim forces. Hence, neither sexual atrocities can be committed by the Muslim

forces nor can they enslave any citizen who had taken no active part to fight against the Muslims. We have already discussed in detail that normally slaves could be ransomed against payment for them or in exchange with the Muslim slaves held by the enemies. **For the residue, the Qur'an gives preference to release them as a gesture of charity.** It has not been mandatory for the Muslims to enslave the remainder from the slaves. Anyhow, the Muslim commander of the Armies could retain them for some time or distribute them among certain personnel of the Army keeping in view the circumstances at the moment.

As regards women captives of war who had always been very few among the prisoners, the masters could marry them or keep them just as handmaids having no sex with them. In any case Muslims must acknowledge the captive women as full human beings enjoying all types of respect and rights like other Muslims except the freedom till it is granted by their masters. Muslims have, therefore, been marrying the women captives of war who though, themselves enjoyed the position of secondary wives yet in case of getting children from their masters they became Umm-e-Walad – a status between a free wife and a slave woman – and children from them enjoyed parity of rights with genuine offspring of the master. Jurists, however, differ about any ceremony of a regular marriage about the captives of war allotted to them. Some of them take their allotment by the Emir equal to their Nikaah with their master. This is so because the essential ingredients of a regular marriage were sanity, freedom, adulthood, willingness of both the male and female, presence of the guardian of the female and two witnesses to attest the formalization of the contract. Since, the women captives of war stood deprived of their guardianship and status of freedom, therefore, they did not enjoy the privilege of entering into any contractual relationship with their masters or others. Official allotment or such women to certain specified persons stood as a substitute for marriage. The normal practice had, however, been to seek consent of the woman captive of war and marry them before entering into an intercourse with them. A commandment of the Lord also suggests the same:

If any of you have not the means wherewith to wed free

believing women, they may wed believing girls from among those whom your right hands possess: And Allah hath full knowledge about your faith. **Ye are one from another:** Wed them with the leave of their owners, and **give them their dowers**, according to what is reasonable: They should be chaste, not lustful, nor taking paramours: when they are taken in wedlock, if they fall into shame, their punishment is half that for free women. This (permission) is for those among you who fear sin; but it is better for you that ye practise self-restraint. And Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.⁵¹⁶

The comments of Mr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali on the afore-stated verse are quoted below. While exposing the afore-stated verses, he writes:

That is, captives taken in Jihad: Your right hands does not mean necessarily that she has been assigned to you, or is your property. All captures in war belong to the community, they are "yours" in that sense. If you seek such a person in marriage, do it from no base motives. Safeguard your faith, and **see that she too does believe**. In that case, after all, she is of the human brotherhood, and her condition is accidental and redeemable. If the slave bore a child to her master, she would become free.⁵¹⁷

While commenting on verse 3 of Surah 4 (Al-Nisa), Allama Muhammad Asad opined that:

Lit., "whom your right hands possess" - i.e., from among the captives taken in a war in God's cause (regarding which see notes on Surah 2, notes 167 and 168, and Surah 8, note 72). It is obvious that the phrase "two, or three, or four: but if you have reason to fear...", etc. is a parenthetic clause relating to both the free women mentioned in the first part of the sentence and to female slaves - **for both these nouns are governed by the imperative verb "marry"**. Thus, the whole sentence has this meaning: "Marry from among [other] women such as are lawful to you, or [from among] those whom you rightfully possess - [even] two, or three, or four: but if you have reason to fear that you might not be able to treat them with equal fairness, then [only] one" - **implying that, irrespective of whether they are free women or, originally, slaves, the number of wives must not exceed four**. It was in this sense that Muhammad 'Abduh understood the above verse (see Manar IV, 350). This view is, moreover, supported by verse 25 of this Surah as well as by 24:32, where marriage with female slaves is spoken of. **Contrary to the popular view and the practice of many Muslims in**

⁵¹⁶ Al-Qur'an 4:25 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵¹⁷ Commentary of Yusuf Ali in footnote No. 540 under verse 4:25.

the past centuries, neither the Qur'an nor the life-example of the Prophet provides any sanction for sexual intercourse without marriage. As regards the permission to marry more than one wife (up to the maximum of four), it is so restricted by the condition, "**if you have reason to fear that you might not be able to treat them with equal fairness, then [marry only] one**", as to make such plural marriages possible only in quite exceptional cases and under exceptional circumstances (see also the first clause of 24:32 and the corresponding note). Still, one might ask why the same latitude has not been given to women as well; but the answer is simple. Notwithstanding the spiritual factor of love which influences the relations between man and woman, the determinant biological reason for the sexual urge is, in both sexes, procreation: and whereas a woman can, at one time, conceive a child from one man only and has to carry it for nine months before she can conceive another, a man can beget a child every time he cohabits with a woman. Thus, while nature would have been merely wasteful if it had produced a polygamous instinct in woman, man's polygamous inclination is biologically justified. It is, of course, obvious that the biological factor is only one - and by no means always the most important - of the aspects of marital love: none the less, it is a basic factor and, therefore, decisive in the institution of marriage as such. With the wisdom that always takes human nature fully into account, Islamic Law undertakes no more than the safeguarding of the socio-biological function of marriage (which includes also care of the progeny), allowing a man to have more than one wife and not allowing a woman to have more than one husband at one time; while the spiritual problem of marriage, being imponderable and therefore outside the scope of law, is left to the discretion of the partners. In any event – since marriage in Islam is a purely civil contract – recourse to divorce is always open to either of the two partners.⁵¹⁸

Here we would also like to reproduce a commentary from Allama Asad on verse 24:32 which points out that all forms of sex with a concubine or female slave is void without a lawful marriage. He says:

The term *as-salihin* connotes here both moral and physical fitness for marriage: i.e., the attainment of bodily and mental maturity as well as mutual affection between the man and the

⁵¹⁸ Allama Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur'an*, (Gibraltar: Darul-Andalus, 1980), Commentary of *Surah 4*, Verse 3. footnote of p. 101.

woman concerned. As in 4:25, **the above verse rules out all forms of concubinage and postulates marriage as the only basis of lawful sexual relations between a man and his female slave.**⁵¹⁹

Islam Curtails the Sources of Concubinage

Even in the early days of Islam, the main source for concubinage had been the residue of the captives of war i.e. those women who could neither be released in exchange of Muslim captives of war nor against ransom paid by the enemy. The Imam i.e. the ruler or the leader of the Muslim Army, therefore, had the discretion to decide their fate.

The Qur'an enjoins that:

Therefore, when ye meet the Unbelievers (in fight), smite at their necks; At length, when ye have thoroughly subdued them, bind a bond firmly (on them): thereafter (is the time for) either generosity or ransom: Until the war lays down its burdens. Thus (are ye commanded): but if it had been Allah's Will, He could certainly have exacted retribution from them (Himself); but (He lets you fight) in order to test you, some with others. (...).⁵²⁰

It transpires from the above that the Qur'an did not plainly enjoin on the Muslims either to release all such captives of war or to retain them as their slaves or servants. The final decision about them has been left to the discretion of the ruler of the Muslim State (formerly known as Khalifah, Emir or Imam) or leader of the Muslim Armies who could decide the matter keeping in view the circumstances prevailing at the time.

It is pertinent to note here that in spite of the fact that the Qur'an did not plainly prohibit slavery, **yet priority seems to have been given to generosity over the ransom.** In both cases the verses quoted above stress at the release of the war captives than to keep them under bondage permanently. In case, the Imam decides to retain the captive women, he can allot or distribute them to certain personnel of the Army or others at his own discretion. The beneficiaries enjoy the status of the masters of men as well

⁵¹⁹ Allama Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur'an*, Commentary of Surah 24, Verse 32. footnote of p. 539.

⁵²⁰ Al-Qur'an 47:4 (Yusuf Ali).

as women possessed by them. They had the option to sell them or to retain them as their subservient or to grant freedom to them.

Let us reiterate that a Muslim cannot cohabit with the captive woman allotted to him even with her consent unless and until ensuring that she was not pregnant. In case the woman is found pregnant, no sexual intercourse is allowed till she attains cleanliness after delivery of the baby. As regards other married women, they must wait till their cleanliness after occurrence of menses to them. In such a case, there is no need to wait for three or four and a half month as in the case of divorced women or the widows respectively. Islam also does not allow exchange of the concubines among the Muslims, nor can they hire them to others.⁵²¹ By violation of the law, they will be subjected to the punishment for adultery.

Elimination of slavery and concubinage had always been one of the prime motives of Islam. It repeatedly exhorts Muslims to grant freedom to the slave for expiation of different sins or for bounteous rewards in the Hereafter. Alternately, Islam stresses on improvement of the social status, working conditions, treatment of slaves like brethren and to feed and clothe them in the likeness of their masters. Various injunctions of Islam promote welfare of the slaves and concubines which has no match in the laws of the Religions of Book and any other law regarding treatment of the slaves throughout the world. It will, therefore, be expedient to recount some of the reforms of Islam in the following:

- 1.** Slaves men or women are to be treated nicely. They must be provided with food, shelter and medical assistance in case of need. Islam does not believe in subjecting them to any unbearable burden of work or physical torture of any sort. Islam strongly abhors humiliation or debasement of captives of war held by the believers.
- 2.** In case, the slave woman gets children, they will be born free and entitled to inherit property as well as other privileges from father of the children. Similarly, أم ولد, (Umm

⁵²¹ Al-Qur'an 24:33.

Walad i.e. mother of the offspring) gets a higher social status with the birth of a child. **A woman will be entitled to the status of Umm Walad even if there occurs an abortion or she gives birth to a dead child.** After the birth of a child, it depends on her master to grant her freedom. Anyhow, if the master does not grant freedom to Umm Walad during his life she will be automatically free after his death.

3. Sayyidina Ibn Umar Reported from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ :

The Messenger of Allah disallowed the selling of Umm Walad. He said, **They must not be sold, or gifted, or inherited.** As long as the master is alive, he may enjoy her but when he dies, she will be free.⁵²²

Case of Thomas Jefferson

A comparative study of the treatment of Muslims with the slave women acquiring the status of Umm e Walad can be had from the study of the case of Thomas Jefferson who had been president of USA from 1801 to 1809. He did not grant freedom either to his concubines nor owned his children from them:

In a letter to Edward Coles in August 1814, Jefferson professes himself against slavery and argues that the degenerate condition of 'negroes' is (partly?) due to slavery – he hopes that it will be abolished. In the meantime masters should treat slaves as well as possible (Notes on the State of Virginia, 284-7). However, he only formally freed two of his many slaves in his lifetime – both of them believed to be his sons by his slave Sally Hemings. His daughters by Hemings ran away (or were allowed to leave) and were not pursued. In spite of DNA and other evidence some Jefferson scholars continue to assert that it is implausible that the great man fathered children on one of his slaves.⁵²³

4. Chaste women from the People of Book can be married by the believers after paying their dowers with the desire of chastity and not for the lewdness or secret intrigues. Such women will be free to practice their religion without any

⁵²² Maulana Saeed Ahmed, *Slavery in Islam*, p. 126. (from *Muwatta Imam Maalik*.)

⁵²³ Judith Still, *Derrida and Other Animals*, p. 299-300.

hindrance from their master. They will also not be forced to change their faith. The Almighty revealed that:

This day are (all) things good and pure made lawful unto you. The food of the People of the Book is lawful unto you and yours is lawful unto them. (Lawful unto you in marriage) are (not only) chaste women who are believers, **but chaste women among the People of the Book, revealed before your time,- when ye give them their due dowers, and desire chastity, not lewdness, nor secret intrigues** if any one rejects faith, fruitless is his work, and in the Hereafter he will be in the ranks of those who have lost (all spiritual good).⁵²⁴

5. In case a consignee or allottee does not incline to marry a slave woman, he must allow her to remain chaste. Alternatively, it is better to arrange suitable marriage for her. The Qur'an also exhorts needy Muslims to marry such women (4:25).

The believers not having the sources to marry will have to live the life of forced celibacy till the Lord grants them the sources to marry. Alternately it is preferable that all healthy men having the sources to marry may live a married life instead of living alone. The Almighty admires true Muslims with qualities as detailed in the following:

The believers must (eventually) win through,- Those who humble themselves in their prayers; Who avoid vain talk; Who are active in deeds of charity; Who abstain from sex, Except with those joined to them in the marriage bond, or (the captives) whom their right hands possess,- for (in their case) they are free from blame, But those whose desires exceed those limits are transgressors;⁵²⁵

6. Islam had strictly forbidden enslaving the people by abduction or purchasing poor people or their children. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said 'I will myself raise against such culprits as indulge in the trade of free souls.'

7. Similarly, Islam also does not allow quenching of the sexual lust through free love such as prevailing in the West today. Islam terms all sexual relations out of the lawful wed-lock as adultery which is punishable in the following manner:

⁵²⁴ Al-Qur'an 5:5 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵²⁵ Ibid, 23:1-7 (Yusuf Ali).

The woman and the man guilty of adultery or fornication,- flog each of them with a hundred stripes: Let not compassion move you in their case, in a matter prescribed by Allah, if ye believe in Allah and the Last Day: and let a party of the Believers witness their punishment.⁵²⁶

The Allegation of Countless Concubines

Many Western writers point a finger on countless concubines in the harems of Muslim kings, emirs or most wealthy merchants. Although we cannot deny exceptional existence of the evil in the Harems of some of the Muslim kings or extremely rich people yet ordinary believers have usually been free from this malady. Most of them had been observing *Shariah* strictly and did not indulge in such evils. One of the Christian critics on slavery pointed out about 700 women in the harems of the later Ottoman Sultans. We, however, find much exaggeration in the statement. As regards the Ottoman Sultans, no Muslim historian has pointed out such a multiplicity of wives or concubines with any of the Sultans. Ottoman Sultans did not have their courts and working offices far away from their palaces. The outer parts of their residence were used as guest rooms, court rooms and other offices of administration under the Sultan. The present writer had personally been to Topcapi Palace at Istanbul and can utter with full confidence that it does not have the capacity to accommodate 700 women or concubines along with similar number of the guards with many courtiers. May be during the day time the courtyards and the gardens attached with the palace may accommodate 500 to 600 people yet a large number of concubines could not be housed therein. For detailed description, please refer to our book '*Slavery and Human Rights through the Ages*' Vol. I, Ch. 11, titled '*Target Islam-I*'.

Most of the Turkish Sultans had one or two wives which they usually chose from the girls or women presented to them from the countries conquered by their subordinates. The concubine if any selected by the sultan usually got a permanent attachment with him. Some out of them attained the honor of a regular wife i.e. the queen. It is said that no Sultan after 1601 married any woman from the

⁵²⁶ Ibid, 24:2 (Yusuf Ali).

influential families of the Muslims. This was done perhaps to avoid palatial intrigues. As such, most of the Sultans among the Ottomans were the sons of such women raised to the status of the regular wives of the Sultans. The Sultans were God-fearing people and strict observant of the code of Islamic Law. There has never been a report of any illegitimate sons of the Sultans. As compared to this, there are thousands of examples of the illegitimate sons of the kings, dukes or knights as well as statesmen in the West. Interested readers may consult Wikipedia to find the details. (please go through the articles under the categories: *Illegitimate Children of British Monarchs*, *Royal Bastards of Numerous European Kingdoms* in the Wikipedia.)

While the earliest Sultans of Ottoman Empire had been extremely moderate and humble in their life, yet the later Sultans i.e. from the beginning of the 18th century to the end of the caliphate had been somewhat lavish in their living. It was perhaps due to the impact of other kings of the time. Louis XIV (r. 1643-1715) e.g. had been much more lavish than any Muslim king or emperor of the time. He constructed a magnificent royal **palace at Versailles near Paris which took 42 years to complete**. It had a hall of mirrors 246x33 feet. The palace itself stretched 700 yards on each side while the gardens covered 250 acres of land.

Because of its great size, Versailles was like a small royal city. The palace contained a chapel, theater, library, and numerous council chambers where the king's ministers met to discuss state business. In addition about 1000 nobles and their 4,000 servants crowded into the palace's 226 rooms. Another 5000 servants were housed in nearby annexes.⁵²⁷

In spite of collecting all luxuries, comforts and glory, the reign of Louis XIV came to a sad end. It has been stated that:

His only legitimate son died in 1711, and his favorite grandson died a year later.

In 1715, the saddened Sun King, now 77, developed gangrene in one leg. Gracious to the end, he said farewell to his wife, his courtiers, and his weeping servants. Then he

⁵²⁷ *World History, Perspectives on the Past*, p. 443.

called to his bed his five-year-old great-grandson, the future Louis XV. "My child," said the dying king, "do not imitate me in the taste that I have had for building or for war. Try, on the contrary, to be at peace with your neighbors ... Try to comfort your people, which unhappily I have not done."⁵²⁸

Towards the end of the caliphate, the Ottomans, too, might have grown lethargic and lavish in their living yet they never resorted to exorbitant taxation of the subjects nor made their lives miserable through intolerance, persecution or injustice in their domain. As compared to them, the Bourbon family had depleted the sources of their income by excessive taxation and extravagance on their luxuries. France was in financial turmoil and Louis XVI (r. 1774-1791) was forced to convene the Estates-General. He tried to flee France in June 1791, but was captured and executed on 21 January 1793. It has been recorded that:

A significant portion of the debt came from the cost of maintaining the royal family at Versailles. For example, Marie Antoinette spent 100,000 livres a year on clothing at a time when 50,000 livres would support a lavish lifestyle, and the average peasant earned 500 to 700 livres a year. By 1789, the government used 50 percent of its budget to pay interest on its debt and 13 percent to support **the royal family's household staff of 15000 people.**⁵²⁹

It is, therefore, apparent from the above that the household staff of Louis XIV was 21 times larger than that of the Ottomans. Similarly, the staff of Louis XVI must be containing much larger number of women or concubines than ever could be held by any Ottoman Sultan.

Stanley Lane Poole on Prostitution and Concubinage

Stanley Lane Poole has been habitual to decry the Holy Prophet ﷺ and Islam on one account or the other. While criticizing concubinage, he says:

And another fact which shows that the **Mohammadan system, bad as it is**, is free from a defect which social systems better in other respects than Mohammad's are subject to is the **extreme rarity of prostitution in Muslim towns.** The courtesan forms a very small item in the census

⁵²⁸ *World History, Perspectives on the Past*, p. 447.

⁵²⁹ *World History, Perspectives on the Past*, p. 482.

of a Mohammadan city, and is retained more for strangers from Europe than for the Muslim inhabitants. Instances are frequently occurring in the Indian law courts which show the strong feeling that exists on the subject among the Mohammadans of India. They consider it quite inconceivable that a Muslim should have illicit intercourse with a free Muslimeh woman, and this inconceivableness of the action is urged as evidence in trials of the legitimacy of children. But whilst admitting the importance of this remarkable feature in Islam, it must not be forgotten that the **liberty allowed by their law to Muslims in the matter of concubines does not very materially differ from prostitution**, and whilst the latter is directly forbidden by the dominant religion of Europe, **Concubineage is as directly permitted by Islam.**⁵³⁰

The mental perversion of Stanley Lane Poole is evident even from the first sentence of his observation given above which contains his remarks that "*Muhammadan system, bad as it is*". His subsequent words, therefore, lose their value as a faithful discussion on the matter. Instead of any detailed review of his remarks, therefore, it may suffice to reply his his observation that "*whilst the latter [concubinage] is directly forbidden by the dominant religion of Europe, [implying Christianity]* **Concubineage is as directly permitted by Islam.**"

We, however, observe that facts do not change with fallacious remarks of the historians or the missionaries like Stanley Lane Poole. The OT no doubt had banned adultery and fornication and the victims had to be punished by burning alive or stoning them to death. Islam, too, followed the law of the Lord revealed to the prophets preceding the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ with amendments if any revealed by the Lord. Islam, therefore, continued to punish such culprits by stoning them or by flogging the unmarried victims of the crimes. It was under the influence of the Greco-Roman Culture that the earliest Christian fathers changed the Divine Law to conform to the Roman Law. In case of a woman caught in adultery, the Evangelists attributed the following words to Jesus Christ.

⁵³⁰ Edward William Lane, *Selections from the Qur'an*, (London: Trubner & Co. Ludgate Hill, 1879), p. xcii-xciii, (Introduction by Stanley Lane Poole).

(...) He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.⁵³¹

Hearing this all the accusers went away from him. Jesus then gave his verdict that:

Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.⁵³²

This is the standard example of Christian treatment in the case of the adulterous women in the New Testament. As a cross reference to the same, the Christians sages suggest that:

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.⁵³³

Another instance is:

And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.⁵³⁴

The net result is that the prostitutes and adulterous people must go unpunished. Instead of suggesting any punishment to the culprits, Jesus Christ in fact had been treating nicely with them. Mary Magdalene probably a prostitute had been portrayed as Jesus' closest disciple and the one who truly understood his teachings. Later Christians take her as heroine of faith and the closest disciple of Jesus. Similarly, the King James Version of 1979 contains the title '*A Sinful Woman Forgiven*' under which we find that on the invitation of a Pharisee, Jesus had gone to eat with him. It has the narrative that:

37. And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, **38.** And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.⁵³⁵

Those who were present were surprised. On this, Jesus had been quoted having said

44. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me

⁵³¹ Joh 8:7 KJV.

⁵³² Joh 8:11 KJV.

⁵³³ Joh 3:17 KJV.

⁵³⁴ Joh 12:47 KJV.

⁵³⁵ Luk 7:37-38 KJV.

no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. **45.** Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. **46.** My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. **47.** Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. **48.** And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.⁵³⁶

Before proceeding further let us ponder the lesson attributed to the prophet of the Lord for personal services by the stranger women (نامحرم). Doesn't it imply humiliation and natural inferiority of women? Please also note the teachings of the New Testament to get rid of the sinfulness of prostitution and adultery. Ever since then, the Christian attitudes to prostitution had been oscillating throughout the ages. Often, they were determined by the immediate interests of the church. It was the church that could embrace prostitution when it suited, as it did for financial reasons. The following excerpt from a brief writing on prostitution by *www.badnewsaboutchristianity.com* has it that:

At one time there was a successful church brothel in Avignon where the girls devoted part of their time to religious duties, and part of it attending to the needs of Christian customers — inheritors of the ancient practice of temple prostitution. Pope Julius II was said to have been so impressed by the one in Avignon that he founded a similar one in Rome. Prostitution was regarded as a lesser evil than sodomy, so brothels were sometimes founded in order to encourage heterosexual sex. Following a series of clerical reports in 1415, an Office of Decorum was set up in Florence to reduce endemic homosexual activity. One of its tasks was to set up a municipal brothel. The Church certainly leased property to brothel keepers. In the late Middle Ages the papacy netted 28,000 ducats a year from such property. The Church seems to have taken some pride in its promotion of prostitution, as for example at Lyons. When Pope Innocent IV left an extended Church Council there in the mid-thirteenth century, Cardinal Hugo made a farewell speech.

We have made great improvements since we have been here. When we arrived, we found three or four brothels.

⁵³⁶ Luk 7:44-47 KJV.

We are leaving only one behind us. We must add, however, that this one brothel stretches from the east to the west gate.

Does it mean that the entire church had been turned into a brothel, we leave it to readers to guess. For original sources, the readers may refer to the books mentioned in the notes at the end of the article. Even if we take it for granted that Christianity had forbidden the prostitution, we find no impact of the embargo in the West. Prostitution had been extremely wide-spread in almost all parts of European countries even prior to the medieval periods and it has always been flourishing speedily throughout the Christian West. According to the prevailing practice in European culture, sex with any adult woman with her consent is not a cognizable offence. The relaxation, therefore, protects unlawful sex with prostitutes or other women in the society.

Stanley Lane Poole is also incorrect to observe that Islam has any provision to allow misuse of slave women or concubines as prostitutes. Ignoring the animosity of Lane Poole and his misrepresentation about Islam, the readers are requested to refresh themselves with the Islamic injunctions about the slave women or the concubines even in the short description in the preceding part of this chapter. Factually, free sex had never been rampant in the Islamic countries as we find in the Western society. Even otherwise the Muslims never happened to capture such large number of captive women that they could allot one slave woman to every participant in the war. They had actually been so few in numbers that hardly 1 out of 40 persons could be awarded a slave woman to serve at his house. Even the legal allotment of captive women had ceased ever since the end of Muslim conquests in the world.

One of the reasons to allow continuation of polygamy among the Muslims had been to prevent any unlawful sex in the society. The prominent scholars, therefore, declare concubinage unlawful in the modern times e.g. Mufti Muhammad Shaf'i is of the opinion that it is strictly forbidden to keep a possessed or purchased woman without Nikaah (lawful marriage).⁵³⁷ There are many other scholars

⁵³⁷ In his '*Ma'arif-ul-Qur'an*' (Urdu) Vol. 2, under exposition of Surah 4:3, p. 394.

to endorse the same opinion as mentioned in the preceding parts of the chapter.

WOMEN IN THE MODERN TIMES

Chastity Gets Outmoded in Europe

Commenting on the changing values day by day, Mrs. Morgan writes that:

Some things become easier with greater permissiveness, others become harder. **People are less likely now to be embarrassed when a man says he loves another man**, which would once have been shocking: they are more likely now to be embarrassed if he says he loves his mother, which would once have been commendable. It is easier for a young girl to kiss a young man in public; **but a recent inquiry revealed that in many areas she would be scared of walking about with her arms around the waist of another girl** – though ladies in the novels of Jane Austen and Dickens and Tolstoy do it constantly with complete lack of inhibition – because now she has heard of lesbianism and it has taught her in new taboo.

Guilt and anxiety are not being dispersed, only attached to different situations. **There is less shame attached to losing one's virginity too soon, and more attached to keeping it too long.** It is less taboo to say 'shit', and more taboo to say 'nigger'. **There is less fear that you can be unbalanced by masturbation, but a new conviction that you can be unbalanced by abstention.** Less obloquy attaches to sleeping with a girl without giving her a wedding ring; but to do it without giving her an orgasm is a newly patented way of lousing up your self-esteem and peace of mind.⁵³⁸

Abortion or Unsupported Motherhoods

Thus one effect is that there are rather fewer sexual problems for young men, as chastity gets outmoded; but a higher proportion of young women are faced with the still formidable **crises of unsupported motherhood or abortion.** Insofar as **it is true that more men are content with casual sex and more women desire a permanent relationship**, the males are now capturing the moral initiative; so that if a girl does what love and marriage, she can now sometimes be conned into actually feeling ashamed of wanting them, and

⁵³⁸ Elain Morgan, *The Descent of Woman*, (London: Souvenir Press Ltd. 1972), p. 258.

denying with profuse apologies that she had any such unreasonable thought in her mind.⁵³⁹

J. B. Priestley's remarks on Matriarchy:

If [American] women become aggressive, demanding, dictatorial, it is because they find themselves struggling to find satisfaction in a world that is not theirs. If they use sex as a weapon, it is because they so badly need a weapon. They are like the inhabitants of an occupied country. They are compelled to accept values and standards that are alien to their deepest nature ... A society in which a man takes his wife for a night out and they pay extra, out of their common stock of dollars, to see another woman undressing herself in a society in which the male has completely imposed his values.' Woman 'is compelled to appear not as her true self, but as the reflection of a man's immature, half-childish, half-adolescent fancies and dreams. Victorious woman forms a lasting relationship with a mature man. Defeated woman strips and teases.' If these tendencies continue to spread we shall all be facing defeat.⁵⁴⁰

Unlimited Equality May Eliminate Marriage

But can marriage (or even sex) survive, once women have achieved equality and independence? The cichlid school of thought affects to have grave doubts about this the cichlid is the fish that the 'psychological castration' boys go on about. It appears that a female cichlid is incapable of mating with a male one unless he is aggressive, belligerent, and masterful; and a male cichlid is rendered impotent by a female who fails to put on a display of timorousness and subservience. **Therefore, it is subtly implied, if women ever attain equality, then we will find to our horror that men are no longer men, and we will all heartily wish that we hadn't been so hasty.**⁵⁴¹

In Soviet Russia, women have had economical equality for a long time now. **Seventy-five per cent of their doctors and teachers are women**, and 58 per cent of their technicians and a third of their engineers, and 63 per cent of their economists, and nearly half their scientists and their lawyers, **and all the women in all the jobs get equal pay.** And while I have heard a lot of criticisms leveled in the West against the average Russian communist, **I don't remember**

⁵³⁹ Elaine Morgan, *The Descent of Woman*, p. 261.

⁵⁴⁰ Elaine Morgan, *The Descent of Woman*, p. 268.

⁵⁴¹ Elaine Morgan, *The Descent of Woman*, p. 275-76.

anyone calling him a sissy [i.e. feeble or effeminate].⁵⁴²

In places where equality between the sexes has gone furthest, as for instance **Moscow, the birth rate is going down fairly rapidly**, not because of ecological exhortation by the state – the authorities are getting no joy out of the trend – but because more women have more options to choose from, and they make their own decisions on the matter.

Another tendency beginning to show itself in Russia and Scandinavia and other places is **for girls of independent outlook to decide to have the baby without the husband. They obviously feel that the latter is a more bothersome thing to get saddled with than the former**.⁵⁴³

Rape During Occupation of Germany

We strangely note that increase in material wealth, comforts and technology had a negative effect on moral values of the West. No where it is more conspicuous than in the moral conduct of the conquering armies during the World War II about which it has been observed that:

As Allied troops entered and occupied German Territory during the later stages of World War II, Mass rapes took place both in connection with combat operations and during the subsequent occupation. Most Western scholars agreed that the majority of the rapes were committed by Soviet servicemen, but estimates were widely different.⁵⁴⁴

Historians have written about sexual violence committed by the armies of the Western Allies and the Red Army as these forces fought their way into the Third Reich and during the period of occupation. (...) The majority of the assaults were committed in the Soviet occupation zone; estimates of the numbers of German women raped by **Soviet soldiers have ranged up to 2 million**. According to historian William Hitchcock, in many cases women were the victims of repeated rapes, **some as many as 60 to 70 times**. At least 100,000 women are believed to have been raped in Berlin, based on surging abortion rates in the following months and contemporary hospital reports, with an **estimated 10,000 women dying in the aftermath. Female deaths in connection with the rapes in Germany, overall, are estimated at 240,000. Antony Beevor describes it as the**

⁵⁴² Elain Morgan, *The Descent of Woman*, p. 276.

⁵⁴³ Elain Morgan, *The Descent of Woman*, p. 280.

⁵⁴⁴ Wikipedia, The Online Encyclopedia.

"greatest phenomenon of mass rape in history", and has concluded that at least 1.4 million women were raped in East Prussia, Pomerania and Silesia alone.⁵⁴⁵

In *Taken by Force*, J. Robert Lilly estimates the number of rapes committed by U.S. servicemen in Germany to be 11,040. As in the case of the American occupation of France after the D-Day invasion, many of the American rapes in Germany in 1945 were gang rapes committed by armed soldiers at gunpoint.⁵⁴⁶

After the fighting moved on to German soil, there was a good deal of rape by combat troops and those immediately following them. The incidence varied between unit and unit according to the attitude of the commanding officer. In some cases offenders were identified, tried by court martial, and punished. The army legal branch was reticent, but admitted that for brutal or perverted sexual offences against German women, some soldiers had been shot – particularly if they happened to be Negroes. Yet I know for a fact that many women were raped by white Americans. No action was taken against the culprits. In one sector a report went round that a certain very distinguished army commander made the wisecrack, 'Copulation without conversation does not constitute fraternization. (...) A typical victimization with sexual assault by drunken American personnel marching through occupied territory involved threatening a German family with weapons, forcing one or more women to engage in sex, and putting the entire family out on the street afterward. As in the eastern sector of the occupation, the number of rapes peaked in 1945, but a high rate of violence against the German and Austrian populations by the Americans lasted at least into the first half of 1946, **with five cases of dead German women found in American barracks in May and June 1946 alone.** Carol Huntington writes that the American soldiers who raped German women and then left gifts of food for them may have permitted themselves to view the act as a prostitution rather than rape. Citing the work of a Japanese historian alongside this suggestion, Huntington writes that Japanese women who begged for food "were raped and soldiers sometimes left food for those they raped."⁵⁴⁷

French troops took part in the invasion of Germany, and France was assigned an occupation zone in Germany. Perry Biddiscombe quotes the original survey estimates that the French for instance committed "385 rapes in the Constance area; 600 in Bruchsal; and 500 in Freudenstadt."

⁵⁴⁵ Wikipedia, The Online Encyclopedia..

⁵⁴⁶ Wikipedia, The Online Encyclopedia..

⁵⁴⁷ Wikipedia, The Online Encyclopedia..

French soldiers were alleged to have indulged in an orgy of rape in the Höfingen District near Leonberg. Katz and Kaiser, though they mention rape, found no specific occurrences in either Höfingen or Leonberg compared to other towns. (...) According to Norman Naimark, French Moroccan troops matched the behavior of Soviet troops when it came to rape, in particular in the early occupation of Baden and Württemberg, providing the numbers are correct.⁵⁴⁸

Under the title '***They Raped Every German Female from 8 to 80'***, Antony Beevor reports that:

"Red Army soldiers don't believe in 'individual liaisons' with German women," wrote the playwright Zakhar Agranenko in his diary when serving as an officer of marine infantry in East Prussia. **"Nine, ten, twelve men at a time - they rape them on a collective basis."**⁵⁴⁹

He further recorded that:

"many Germans declare that all German women in East Prussia who stayed behind were raped by Red Army soldiers". Numerous examples of gang rape were given - "girls under 18 and old women included". (...) **The commander of one rifle division is said to have "personally shot a lieutenant who was lining up a group of his men before a German woman spread eagled on the ground"**. But either officers were involved themselves, or the lack of discipline made it too dangerous to restore order over drunken soldiers armed with submachine guns.⁵⁵⁰

At another place in the article it has been written that General Tsygankov recorded that:

A group of 35 provisional lieutenants on a course and their battalion commander entered the women's dormitory in the village of Grutenberg and raped them. (...) In Dahlem, Soviet officers visited Sister Kunigunde, the mother superior of Haus Dahlem, a maternity clinic and orphanage. The officers and their men behaved impeccably. In fact, the officers even warned Sister Kunigunde about the second-line troops following on behind. Their prediction proved entirely accurate. Nuns, young girls, old women, pregnant women and mothers who had just given birth were all raped without pity.⁵⁵¹

About Berlin it has been written that:

⁵⁴⁸ Wikipedia, The Online Encyclopedia..

⁵⁴⁹ Antony Beevor, *The Guardian*, May 2002.

⁵⁵⁰ Antony Beevor, *The Guardian*, May 2002,.

⁵⁵¹ Antony Beevor, *The Guardian*, May 2002.

Estimates of rape victims from the city's two main hospitals ranged from **95,000 to 130,000**. One doctor deduced that out of **approximately 100,000 women raped in the city, some 10,000 died as a result, mostly from suicide**. The death rate was thought to have been much higher **among the 1.4 million estimated victims in East Prussia**, Pomerania and Silesia. Altogether at least two million German women are thought to have been raped, and a substantial minority, if not a majority, appear to have suffered multiple rape.⁵⁵²

⁵⁵² Antony Beevor, *The Guardian*, May 2002.

WOMEN IN ISLAM

Western writers usually try to fabricate and multiply misconceptions and disinformation about the position of women in Islam. They pretend that Islam subjects women to oppression and exploitation by forcing them **to remain confined within the houses. Women are assigned secondary role in life which stifles their capabilities to grow and to play any active or productive role in the world.** By denying them to participate in the affairs of life on equal bases with the males, the females are being forced to play a secondary role in life. According to them, therefore, females do not enjoy equality of rights with the males.

In this respect we may point out that instead of establishing absolute equality between men and women, Islamic philosophy is based on Divine Guidance of equity between the rights of men and women as shall be elaborated subsequently. Islam, in fact, bestowed great favor on the female sex by absolving them from any denunciation, degradation or blemish based on the original sin etc. Instead of treating them as soulless creatures in the manner of the Greek philosophers, Islam acknowledged full humanity and independent personalities of women. They are, therefore, mentioned as mates (Azwaj) signifying companions, fellow members, sexual partners or counterparts of the males created with the same nature and substance as that of men. The Lord revealed that:

O mankind! reverence your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, His mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women;- reverence Allah, through whom ye demand your mutual (rights), and (reverence) the wombs (That bore you): for Allah ever watches over you.⁵⁵³

Referring to the verse quoted above, Mr. John J. Pool remarked that:

I'm afraid that amongst Mohammedans that the term does not mean very much; at any rate, it does not keep them from **treating their women as an inferior creation to men**, and

⁵⁵³ Al-Qur'an 4:1 Yusuf Ali.

of exercising over them a despotic power. Mohammedan women labour under many **disabilities and hardships of which Christian women, happily, have little or no experience.**⁵⁵⁴

In this respect, we could hardly find a hypocrite greater than Mr. Pool. He perhaps feels that other people in the world do not know contents of the Old Testament, the patristic observation about women and treatment of the Christian West with the women throughout their history up to the first half of the 20th century. Interested readers may, therefore, find certain details of the same in our chapters titled '**Denunciation of Women**' and '**Women, Christianity and the West**' in this book. Mr. Pool must have known that women had not been acknowledged as human beings in Europe before the last quarter of the 6th century when France had been the first state to accept them as human beings in 586 AD. No substantial improvement in the humanity or social status or women could be observed thereafter up to 1700 AD.

We, however, observe that all such concepts are based either on misunderstanding or bias against Islam which in fact, was the first religion to acknowledge status and rights of women equal to men in the society. **It relieved the suffering of women in celibacy, widowhood, divorce, loneliness, desertion or insecurity in their youth as well as in the Old Age.** Islam pays full attention to women's rights and cures various evils of the customs and law in different societies of the world.

Being a religion of nature, however, Islam assigns duties to the males as well as the females keeping in view the differences in their nature of creation, physical structure and instincts, passions, inclinations and their capabilities (mental as well as physical), strength and courage etc. **It was, therefore, on the principles of the division of labor that Islam ascribed primary role to men in respect of earning the living,** protecting the wife and the children by providing them home, food, clothing and managing multifarious affairs of the family. On the same

⁵⁵⁴ John J. Pool, *Studies in Muhammedanism* (1892), p. 30.

basis, it was ordained that the **primary sphere of woman's activity was her home**. She has to safeguard husband's honor, possessions and the house. She is obliged to rear the children, to make the house comfortable for the husband and the family. A wife also was obliged to guard her chastity and to avoid everything that may displease her husband. Since only men are duty bound to earn the living, therefore, Islam does not require or desire women to work outside the house. For discipline sake, however, **Islam declared men as قوامون i.e. supporters, protectors, in charge, managers, overseers or maintainers of women.**⁵⁵⁵ This was not done to establish the lordship of males over the females. It was for the sake of discipline that Islam appointed the males to discharge the responsibilities of a leader in the house. As such, Islam relieves the women from all risky and toilsome jobs outside the house.

It's a well accepted principle throughout the world that no home or organization can be run with equal status of all members there. It is necessary that one person must be selected as the head of an institution while others should obey him to run an organization successfully. Absolute equality between man and woman will, therefore, create day to day clash among the husband and the wife. Islam has, therefore, made man the manager of the family affairs while woman serves as ruler in the family after her husband. Islam is so strict about discipline that it has been said:

Narrated AbuSa'id al-Khudri: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: When three are on a journey, they should appoint one of them as their commander.⁵⁵⁶

Narrated Abu Hurayrah: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: When three are on a journey, they should appoint one of them as their commander. Nafi' said: We said to AbuSalamah: You are our commander.⁵⁵⁷

Similarly, Islam preaches married life for all adult women till their old age. Islam desires that the women may play their natural role in life. Since celibacy is unnatural way of

⁵⁵⁵ Al-Qur'an 4:34.

⁵⁵⁶ *Saheeh Abu Dawud*, Chapter 14, Hadith Number 2602.

⁵⁵⁷ *Saheeh Abu Dawud*, Hadith Number 2603.

living, therefore, Islam does not appreciate the virginity or celibacy of the grown up women. As compared to this the position is much different in the Christian countries.

It is said that out of less than 3 million women in 1851, in England and Wales there were **about 12,48,000 women in the prime life i.e. between 20 and 40 years who had remained single unintentionally.**

As regards the social status of women, the Qur'an treats them on parity with men.

O mankind! reverence your Guardian-Lord, who created you **from a single person, created, of like nature, His mate,** and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women;- reverence Allah, through whom ye demand your mutual (rights), and (reverence) the wombs (That bore you): for Allah ever watches over you.⁵⁵⁸

This verse not only creates equality of status between man and woman but also acknowledges full humanity of women along with all their rights like men as sanctioned by the Almighty which we have discussed at various places in the book.

The equality of men and women before the LORD is also evident from the following:

Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has Faith, verily, to him will We give a new Life, a life that is good and pure and We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions.⁵⁵⁹

Islam does not aim at degrading or subjecting women to oppression. The Prophet ﷺ said:

Narrated by Aysha; Abdullah ibn Abbas Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, "*The best of you is he who is best to his family, and I am the best among you to my family.*"⁵⁶⁰

Narrated Mu'awiyah al-Qushayri Mu'awiyah asked: Apostle of Allah, what is the right of the wife of one of us over him? He replied: **That you should give her food when you eat, clothe her when you clothe yourself, do not strike her on the face, do not revile her or separate yourself from her except in the house.**⁵⁶¹

⁵⁵⁸ Al-Qur'an 4:1 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid, 16:97 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁶⁰ *Sahih Al-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 3252

⁵⁶¹ *Sunan Abu Dawud*, Chapter 11, Hadith Number 2137.

Narrated Mu'awiyah ibn Haydah I said: Apostle of Allah, how should we approach our wives and how should we leave them? He replied: Approach your tilth when or how you will, give her (your wife) food when you take food, clothe when you clothe yourself, **do not revile her face, and do not beat her.**⁵⁶²

Islam also raised the status of women as mothers, wives sisters and daughters.⁵⁶³ Instead of hating the daughters or sisters, Islam enjoins all Muslims to treat them with love and kindness considering them as **the most valuable boon of nature which ensures paradise for those who treated them fairly**, educated them properly and arranged suitable marriages for them. In this respect, the readers are requested to refresh themselves with the sayings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ given in our chapter on '*Condemnation and Deprivation of Women*' under the topic '*Daughters a Misfortune*'.

Islam as Reformer of Matrimonial and Inheritance Laws

In spite of high sounding assertions of the West about the equality of rights, social status and liberty of women, we observe that Judaism or Christianity utterly failed to acknowledge the respectable position and the status as an independent person for women enjoying parity of basic rights with the males. Besides depriving them from their rights in property, they also refused adequate security or congenial atmosphere to women for living in peace and tranquility. They made no provision for millions of women desiring to marry and having their own home and protection for themselves and their children. Although, most of the widows had no role in the death of their former husbands yet they stand condemned in both the religions stated above.

Ignoring the shortcomings in the Law to protect women, we observe that the Christian literature had never been free from condemnation of the feminine gender till today. It is only the Islam which enjoined respect and love for women

⁵⁶² *Sunan Abu Dawud*, Chapter 11, Hadith Number 2138.

⁵⁶³ Qur'an 31:14 and 41:15.

in their roles such as mothers, sisters, wives and daughters. Muslims usually disapprove only those women who indulged into some specific misconduct but normally, they do not decry feminine gender as a whole. Anyhow, instead of any pretension of a perfect equality between men and women, in all respects, Islam stresses on equity, based on mutual respect, love and equality of rights between them. The same is evident from a comparative study of the rights and privileges of women in the Bible and in the Qur'an. To elucidate the point, we shall be drawing a comparison between the laws of inheritance, marriage, divorce treatment with the divorcees and the widows and punishment for crimes contained in the Bible and the Qur'an. Similarly, certain examples from the literature of the West will also be produced to point out the general mindset of the West about the women folk. In this respect we start from the inheritance.

Inheritance

Islam was the first religion to emancipate women from subjugation and oppression prevailing throughout the world. There had been long history of exploitation of women and their condemnation as low and mean creatures. Even the sages among the Christians would teach the people to avoid them like snakes and scorpions. It was the prophet of Islam who raised his voice to relieve them from the disapprobation and desperation caused by the hypocrisy and high-handedness of the males. Islam, therefore, enjoined on the Muslims to accord them a place of dignity and honor in the society. Rights of women as mothers, sisters, wives and daughters were clearly spelled out so that no one may treat them as inferior creatures in the society.

Islamic injunctions about Inheritance

As compared to the Law of Moses, the Qur'an clearly specifies shares of the inheritors in the following words:

7. From what is left by parents and those nearest related there is a share for men and a share for women, whether the property be small or large,-a determinate share. (...), **11.** Allah (thus) directs you as regards your Children's (Inheritance): to the male, a portion equal to that of two females: if only daughters, two or more, their share is two-

thirds of the inheritance; if only one, her share is a half. For parents, a sixth share of the inheritance to each, if the deceased left children; if no children, and the parents are the (only) heirs, the mother has a third; if the deceased left brothers (or sisters) the mother has a sixth. (The distribution in all cases ('s) after the payment of legacies and debts. Ye know not whether your parents or your children are nearest to you in benefit. These are settled portions ordained by Allah; and Allah is All-knowing, All-wise. **12.** In what your wives leave, your share is a half, if they leave no child; but if they leave a child, ye get a fourth; after payment of legacies and debts. In what ye leave, their share is a fourth, if ye leave no child; but if ye leave a child, they get an eighth; after payment of legacies and debts. If the man or woman whose inheritance is in question, has left neither ascendants nor descendants, but has left a brother or a sister, each one of the two gets a sixth; but if more than two, they share in a third; after payment of legacies and debts; so that no loss is caused (to any one). Thus is it ordained by Allah; and Allah is All-knowing, Most Forbearing.⁵⁶⁴

They ask thee for a legal decision. Say: Allah directs (thus) about those who leave no descendants or ascendants as heirs. If it is a man that dies, leaving a sister but no child, she shall have half the inheritance: If (such a deceased was) a woman, who left no child, Her brother takes her inheritance: If there are two sisters, they shall have two-thirds of the inheritance (between them): if there are brothers and sisters, (they share), the male having twice the share of the female. Thus doth Allah make clear to you (His law), lest ye err. And Allah hath knowledge of all things.⁵⁶⁵

2. Classless Society

The famous historian J. M. Roberts, therefore, appreciates Islamic reforms granting women the right to inherit property in the following:

Its coming was in many ways revolutionary. It kept women, for example, in an inferior position, but gave them legal rights over nineteenth century. Even the slave had rights and inside the community of the believers there were no castes nor inherited status. This revolution was rooted in a religion which – like that of the Jews – was not distinct from other sides of

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid, 4:7, 11-12 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid, 4:176 (Yusuf Ali).

life, but embraced them all.⁵⁶⁶

Similarly, Mr. Rajindar Sacher, the retired chief Justice of Delhi Court, observes that:

Historically, Islam had been very liberal and progressive in granting **property rights to women. It is a fact that there were no property rights given to Hindu women until 1956**, when the Hindu Code Bill was passed, whereas Islam had granted these rights to Muslim women over 1400 years ago.⁵⁶⁷

The Qur'an creates no differentiation between creation of men and women nor does it point out any inferiority of women as compared to men.

And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquillity with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are Signs for those who reflect.⁵⁶⁸

Women are, therefore, complementary part of man. No male can be perfect unless and until he marries a suitable woman. He also cannot fulfill the responsibilities of procreation of children, making provisions for their food, clothing and shelter without sparing a lot of his time and laboring hard for it. Those who avoid to love their wives and children do not live in tranquillity as enjoined by the Almighty. As such, each ascetic person or a celibate will have to explain his position for rejecting the special gift of God and also to live in accordance with the nature of his creation. Such people who deny the special gift of the Lord and diverge from living in the manner the Lord had commanded them will be answerable for avoiding to be tested and tried under the circumstances provided to them by the Almighty.

Again the LORD has reminded us of His signs that both men and women have been created from the same substance and he also put love and mercy between them so that they may live in peace and tranquility. As such, treating women as defiled or debased creatures is tantamount to challenging the supreme wisdom and purpose of the Lord in

⁵⁶⁶ J. M. Roberts, *The Pelican History of the World*, (Middlesex: Penguin Books, Pelican, 1980), p. 334-335.

⁵⁶⁷ Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, *Woman Between Islam and Western Society*, p. 46.

⁵⁶⁸ Al-Qur'an 30:21 (Yusuf Ali).

creation of humankind as males and females. It is, therefore, evident from the above that the celibates or the monastic people refuse to live in peace and tranquillity as ordained by the Lord.

While we find no mention of the specific duties and rewards for women in the Bible, the Qur'an has frequently reminded men as well as women of gracious as well as rich rewards both for men and women who live a natural life abiding by the Law of the Lord. God is fully aware of the fact that due to the nature of their creation, women cannot always continue to attend the mosques, read the scriptures, perform mandatory prayers and fasting for which the Almighty has granted special privileges to them so that they may not lag behind men in rewards from the Almighty. Besides this, the Qur'an has drastically reduced the constraints of uncleanness from women during menstruation, childbearing or certain other unavoidable circumstances. Their reward, however, is not reduced by such natural obstruction in their routine worship of the Lord. God says:

Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has Faith, verily, to him will We give a new Life, a life that is good and pure and We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions.⁵⁶⁹

In spite of numerous references pertaining to equality of rights between men and women, the Islam does not preach perfect equality between men and women in all fields of life. It ascribes respective duties to each sex in accordance with the nature of their creation. Keeping in view the same, Islam believes in the division of labor to improve harmony among the sexes to increase overall product, prosperity and welfare of the community. The Qur'an, therefore, enjoins that

And in no wise covet those things in which Allah Hath bestowed His gifts More freely on some of you than on others: To men is allotted what they earn, and to women what they earn: But ask Allah of His bounty. For Allah hath full knowledge of all things.⁵⁷⁰

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid, 16:97 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid 4:32 (Yusuf Ali).

Different Roles of Women in Islam

Women in Islam are usually treated with love and respect in Islam. As mothers they enjoy superiority over their sons who have been enjoined to serve and obey them especially in their old age. We are, therefore, quoting some of the injunctions of Islam for the benefit of the readers.

1. Women as Mothers

Islam assigns a respectable position to the parents. Among them, mothers deserve more care and respect as compared to the father. Qur'an says:

And We have enjoined on man (to be good) to his parents: in travail upon travail did his mother bear him, and in years twain was his weaning: (hear the command), "**Show gratitude to Me and to thy parents:** to Me is (thy final) Goal."⁵⁷¹

We have enjoined on man kindness to his parents: In pain did his mother bear him, and in pain did she give him birth. The carrying of the (child) to his weaning is (a period of) thirty months. (...).⁵⁷²

Since mothers suffer much more than the fathers during the period of her pregnancy, runs the risk of her own death during childbirth and has to undergo lot of pains, hardships and unrest to bring up and care for the children, therefore, she deserves much better treatment than the father. The Holy Prophet, therefore, stressed three times for better treatment with one's mother before enjoining similar better treatment with one's father. He said:

I enjoin man about his mother, I enjoin man about his mother, I enjoin man about his mother, I enjoin man about his father.⁵⁷³

Service to mother, therefore, has a preference over service to the father. Disobedience to the parents is counted among the capital sins.⁵⁷⁴

The prophet also said:

Allah has forbidden you to be undutiful to your mothers, to withhold what you should give and to demand what you do

⁵⁷¹ Ibid, 31:14 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁷² Ibid, 46:15 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁷³ Sunan Ibn-e-Maja, Hadith No. 3646, also 3647.

⁵⁷⁴ *Sahih Bukhari*, Vol. 8, Book of Adab.

not deserve and to bury your daughters.⁵⁷⁵

2. Women as Wives

This is perhaps the only role of women where Islam has given advantage to men as husbands over their wives. The ruling principle in this respect has been to maintain order in the family. Islam enjoins on men to be managers/guardians of the family. They are duty bound to serve as earning hand and to attend to all type of risks and hard jobs to protect and provide all the needs of the family. Family as an organization, therefore, cannot be run successfully unless one of the spouses is chosen as an 'emir' while other family members have to follow him. As such the matter pertains to discipline than to grant superiority to males over the females. The matter has already been discussed in the beginning of this chapter where Ahadith from Abu Said Khudri and Abu Hurayrah has been quoted by us (*Saheeh Abu Dawud*, Chapter 14, Hadith Number 2602, 2603).

The non-Muslims in their eagerness to establish absolute equality of rights and authority between males and females have, therefore, misunderstood the importance of discipline in the society which has caused numerous troubles in them. They, therefore, ignore the first part of the verse of the Qur'an quoted below and target its second part i.e. '*men have a degree (of advantage) over them*'. As against their observations, Islam preaches love and care from husbands for their wives. The Qur'an enjoins that:

(...) And women shall have rights similar to the rights against them, according to what is equitable; but men have a degree (of advantage) over them. And Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise.⁵⁷⁶

The Qur'an further enjoins that:

O ye who believe! Ye are forbidden to inherit women against their will. **Nor should ye treat them with harshness**, that ye may Take away part of the dower ye have given them,- except where they have been guilty of open lewdness; on the contrary **live with them on a footing of kindness and equity**. If ye take a dislike to them it may be that ye dislike a

⁵⁷⁵ *Sahih Bukhari*, Vol. 8, Book 73, Hadith No. 6.

⁵⁷⁶ Al-Qur'an 2:228 (Yusuf Ali).

thing, and Allah brings about through it a great deal of good.⁵⁷⁷

In Sunan Abu Daud, we find:

Feed her what you feed yourself with, her clothing should be of the same standard as yours, **do not beat or abuse and rebuke her.**⁵⁷⁸

All this may suffice to bear out that the believers enjoy no liberty to be harsh with women or to mal-treat them in any manner whatsoever.

3. Women as Daughters and Sisters

Islam has introduced great reform in favor of female children in the following:

The Prophet ﷺ said in an authentic Hadith on the authority of the Mother of the Believers 'A'isheh (may Allah be pleased with her): "Whichever (people) are tried by any of them (girls), and he treats them kindly, they will screen him from the fire (of Hell)." [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

The Holy Prophet ﷺ further said:

"Whoever has three girls and is patient with them and clothes them from what he has, they will veil him from the fire (of Hell)."

"Whoever looks after two girls until they attain the age of maturity, would come on the Day of Judgment with me and him being (as close to each other) as these (and he joined his fingers)."" [Muslim]

Prophet ﷺ said: "'Whoever has three daughters whom he gives refuge to, provides for and shows mercy to, Paradise is certainly guaranteed for him.'" A man asked, "And (for) two, O Messenger of Allah?" He ﷺ replied: "And also (for the one who has) two (daughters)." [Ahmad] [Al-Bukhari in Al-Adab Al-Mufrad]

This, therefore, shows that daughters serve as a special trial from the Almighty. Whosoever cares for them, educates them well till they are married in an honorable manner earns salvation for himself from hell. Hence, instead of considering daughters as stigma or misery one must take them as special blessings from the Almighty relieving the fathers or the brothers from the punishment in

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid, 4:19 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁷⁸ Abu Dawud, *Sunan*, The rights of wife, the book of Marriage.

the hell. Prior to the revelation in the Qur'an and the traditions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ such as quoted above even the Arabs treated their daughters like the Hindus. The Qur'an, therefore, describes their disgust in the following:

When news is brought to one of them, of (the birth of) a female (child), his face darkens, and he is filled with inward grief! With shame does he hide himself from his people, because of the bad news he has had! Shall he retain it on (sufferance and) contempt, or bury it in the dust? Ah! what an evil (choice) they decide on?⁵⁷⁹

Some of Arabs of the pre-Islamic days used to kill their daughters soon after their birth. The Qur'an, therefore, admonished human beings to refrain from such a heinous crime. Describing the horrors of the Day of Resurrection and appearing before the Almighty on the Day of Judgment, the Almighty revealed that:

1. when the sun (with its spacious Light) is folded up; **2.** when the stars fall, losing their luster; **3.** when the mountains vanish (Like a mirage); **4.** when the she-camels, ten months with young, are left untended; **5.** when the wild beasts are herded together (in the human habitations); **6.** when the oceans boil over with a swell; **7.** when the souls are sorted out, (being joined, like with like); **8. When the female (infant), buried alive, is questioned 9. For what crime she was killed.**⁵⁸⁰

It is, therefore, obvious that those who killed their daughters to get rid of them will have nothing to defend themselves against the crime committed by them as mentioned in the verses number 8 and 9 quoted above. Such people are doomed to be consumed as fuel of fire in the Hell forever.

Matrimonial Reforms

إيلاء Ila

Both Ila and Zihar were in vogue as a kind of divorce before Islam. Islam, therefore, nullified both unlawful types of divorce i.e. through Ila or Zihar. Believers must, therefore,

⁵⁷⁹ Al-Qur'an 16:58-59 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid, 81:8-9 (Yusuf Ali).

follow the guidance of the Lord to keep away from the wrong traditions of the Old.

There could be numerous chances of development of misunderstanding and dislike between a husband and a wife. Strains and tensions could, therefore, develop suddenly among the partners. In such cases sometimes, men took vows to separate their wives for a long time. They used to put away them even for years. The tradition was quite frequent among the Arabs of Jahiliyyah. It was also in vogue in them to call their wives back for a short duration to desert them again for a long time. Such a situation forced women to live a miserable life of separation as well as desertion during which they received no sustenance or other help from their spouses. To end this hanging position of women, the Qur'an enjoined that:

For those who take an oath for abstention from their wives, a waiting for four months is ordained; if then they return, Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful. But if their intention is firm for divorce, Allah heareth and knoweth all things.⁵⁸¹

As such, if the husband feels a remorse for his oath and feels compelled to break it, he can do so within four months after paying penance in the following manner:

1. Free a slave (not applicable in these times), or
2. Feed ten poor people an average two meals, or
3. Clothe ten poor people enough clothes to cover the majority of their bodies.
4. If one can not do any of the three penances mentioned above for a valid reason then he may fast for three consecutive days.

In this respect the Almighty has further guided that:

O ye who believe! Ye are forbidden to inherit women against their will. Nor should ye treat them with harshness, that ye may Take away part of the dower ye have given them, - except where they have been guilty of open lewdness; **on the contrary live with them on a footing of kindness and equity.** If ye take a dislike to them it may be that ye dislike a thing, and Allah brings about through it a great deal of good.⁵⁸²

⁵⁸¹ Ibid, 2:226-227 (Yusuf Ali).

⁵⁸² Ibid, 4:19 (Yusuf Ali).

In spite of the good guidance given by the Lord in this respect, if the husbands insist on fulfilling their oath of separation, the marriage will stand dissolved automatically at the expiry of four months without any reference to the husband. The woman is free to marry any other person at her will. This reformation, therefore, relieved the women from lifelong torture of hanging position. Both the partners stand separated after four months and both are free to marry wherever they find a good chance for them.

After the lapse of four months, the husband has no right to take her back without the consent of the woman concerned. In case the woman agrees, the man will have to remarry the woman with all usual formalities including payment of fresh dower to her.

ظهار

A formula of repudiation of one's wife by her injurious assimilation to one's mother or sister:

Zihar is a term denoting a custom of the Arabs in the days of ignorance. In case of some estrangement between the husband and the wife, some of the husbands used to utter words such as: "You are for me like the back of my mother." After the said declaration the husband had to treat his former wife like his mother or sister who could neither be touched nor could any sexual relations be continued with them. Most of the Arabs used to take their former wives like their mothers who could not be made sex partners for life. This almost implied that the ties of marriage were held to have been broken for good (see *Maariful Qur'an* P.345 V.8).

If anyone said to his wife that she was to him like his mother, sister, daughter etc. then the Qadhi/ Judge or head of the family or tribe could inquire into the real intention of the person uttering such words. If the husband insisted that his afore-stated utterance aimed at divorce to his wife, then it could be taken as one Talaq Baain. As such, if the husband does not take her back up to four months, the marriage shall stand dissolved after the Iddah of the wife. Alternately if the husband had used the afore-stated words to enhance the respect due to excellence of character, age

or appearance of the wife due to which he equates her with his mother or sister etc. then his words will not be taken to mean dissolution of marriage. Strictly speaking Zihar is a vow for discontinuation of sexual relations with one's wife. Zihar, as such, had been keeping a woman in a hanging position. She could neither claim herself to be a divorced woman to marry someone else nor could she enjoy any privilege of a regular wife of her husband.

In the Jahiliyyah period such a woman would become permanently separated from her husband for her lifetime as regards conjugal relations between them. The husband could not take her back in any case. She was also barred from marrying any other person during the life of her former husband. Islam, therefore, annulled the old custom of hardship and suffering for women by declaring that:

Such of you as put away your wives (by saying they are as their mothers) - They are not their mothers; **none are their mothers except those who gave them birth** - they indeed utter an ill word and a lie. And lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. Those who put away their wives (by saying they are as their mothers) and afterward would go back on that which they have said, (the penalty) in that case (is) the freeing of a slave before they touch one another. Unto this ye are exhorted; and Allah is informed of what ye do.⁵⁸³

Allama Asad has rendered the same verses in the following manner:

As for those of you who [henceforth] separate themselves from their wives by saying, "Thou art as unlawful to me as my mother", [let them bear in mind that] **they can never be [as] their mothers: none are their mothers save those who gave them birth**: and so, behold, they but utter a saying that runs counter to reason, and is [therefore] false. But, behold, God is indeed an absolver of sins, much-forgiving: hence, as for those who would separate themselves from their wives by saying, "Thou art as unlawful to me as my mother", and thereafter would go back on what they have said, [their atonement] shall be the freeing of a human being from bondage before the couple may touch one another again: this you are [hereby] exhorted to do - for God is fully aware of all that you do.⁵⁸⁴

⁵⁸³ Ibid, 58:2-3 (Muhammad M. Pikthal).

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid, 58:2-3 (Allama Asad).

Those who cannot afford or cannot find a slave to set him free can keep fasts for sixty days continuously. In case the husband is unable to keep fast for sixty consecutive days then he can choose between one of the following penalties:

- 1.** Feed sixty poor people to the fill for one day (two meals).
- 2.** Feed one poor person for 60 days (two meals a day).

Alternatively, it will be a capital crime to resume former relations such as touching one's wife or having sexual intercourse with her before paying the penalty (kafarah) as prescribed in the Shariah (Raddul Muhtar P.123 – P.129 V.5 & Bashti Zewar P.318 – P.320).

Although the men had no prohibition to marry other women or to continue their sexual relations with other wives yet the woman separated by Zihar had no chance of marrying anyone else unless and until she gets a proper dissolution from her former husband. The reform, therefore, was extremely beneficial for the women concerned because it saves them from vacillating position beyond four months.

POLYGAMY I

Polygamy in History

Most of the thinkers at present are of the opinion that monogamy is the most natural form of matrimony. They insist that monogamy has the spirit of special exclusiveness and permanent fidelity between the spouses. The actual statistics, however, disprove the presumptions of such people as the readers may find recorded in these chapters. Besides this, the non-prohibition of polygamy in the OT and scriptures of other religions including the Qur'an support the permissibility of the polygamy wherever the circumstances necessitate the same.

Polygamy or more properly polygyny i.e. the union of one man with several women is one of the oldest institutions in the human society. It arose due to circumstances such as sickness, infertility, coldness or unattractiveness of the first wife. Widowhood or divorce of certain unlucky women had also been the cause of loneliness of many women in the society. **Perhaps saving infertile, sick, and unattractive women from divorce had also been a great motive to allow polygamy from the time immemorial.** Polygamy has also been adopted by certain people for gaining more wealth and power by marrying women of great fortune or those belonging to the royal or influential families etc. Polygyny had, therefore, been co-existing with monogamy during all times since Noah. *"Murstein notes that it was practiced in 88% of 154 African societies that were studied, and speculates that perhaps one third of African males are polygynous. Quale quotes sources to the effect that 35% of African males are polygynous but notes that the rate is decreasing, perhaps for economic reasons. George Murdoch, who remains a favoured reference for contemporary authors, estimated that polygyny is practised in over three quarters of the cultures about which we have reliable information. Obviously polygyny cannot be practiced by the majority of*

*males in a society unless there are many more women than men."*⁵⁸⁵

Syed Ameer Ali writes that:

The fact must be borne in mind, that the existence of polygamy depends on circumstances. Certain times, certain conditions of society, make its practice absolutely needful for the preservation of women from starvation or utter destitution. If reports and statistics speak true, the greatest proportion of the frightful immorality prevalent in the centres of civilisation in the West arises from absolute destitution. Abbe Hue and Lady Duff Gordon have both remarked that in the generality of cases sheer force of circumstances drives people to polygamy in the East.⁵⁸⁶

There was, apparently, as among the ancient Medes, Babylonians, Assyrians, and Persians, no restriction as to the number of wives a man might have. **A high caste Brahmin, even in modern times, is privileged to marry as many wives as he chooses.** Polygamy existed among the Israelites before the time of Moses, who continued the institution without imposing any limit on the number of marriages which a Hebrew husband might contract.⁵⁸⁷

To the Persians, religion offered a premium on the plurality of wives. Among the Syro-Phoenician races, whom the Israelites displaced, conquered, or destroyed, polygamy was degraded into bestiality. Among the Thracians, Lydians, and the Pelagian races settled in various parts of Europe and Western Asia, the custom of plurality of marriages prevailed to an inordinate extent, and dwarfs all comparison with the practice prevailing elsewhere.' Among the Athenians, the most civilised and most cultured of all the nations of antiquity, **the wife was a mere chattel, marketable and transferable to others, and a subject of testamentary disposition.** She was regarded in the light of an evil, indispensable for the ordering of the household and procreation of children. An Athenian was allowed to have any number of wives; and Demosthenes gloried in the possession by his people of three classes of

⁵⁸⁵ John C. Gllagher, *Human Sexuality & the Christian Marriage*, (Basilian Fathers of Houston, 2009), p. 71-72.

⁵⁸⁶ Syed Ameer Ali, p. 230.

⁵⁸⁷ Syed Ameer Ali, p. 222.

women, two of which furnished the legal and semi-legal wives.⁵⁸⁸

In many cases, the brothers of the deceased persons had to marry the widows to provide shelter to them and their children if any. Some people had a great attachment with their wives who remained childless for many years. Instead of making such beloved and faithful women lonely and homeless, their husbands found it expedient to marry another woman to serve as a surrogate wife. In such cases, the first wife usually retained her superior position and grip over all the affairs of the house. This was the cause that the barren women themselves managed another wife for their husbands or allowed them to marry another woman to get the children. There also had been certain people who had unusual sexual vitality coupled with enough wealth to maintain additional wives. It was, therefore, better to allow them to marry up to four women to secure moral uprightness of the man, purity of ancestry and chastity of other women and girls in the vicinity. Polygamy had occasionally been prompted due to political reasons. It is said that King Solomon had married about 700 women to strengthen his ties with the kings and chiefs of the tribes in and around the Holy Land. It was perhaps due to political reasons that Akbar the Great married many women belonging to powerful and influential rulers in India primarily to strengthen his political ties with the Rajas, Maharajas and chiefs of the tribes.

Polygamy, Privilege of the Few

Another cause for polygyny had been decimation of the male population due to frequent tribal or international wars or outnumbering of females over males in certain societies. *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* records that:

As long as men are regarded as the owners of women, there will be no limit set to their acquiring them, whether as wives or as concubines or both. Many causes have contributed to make man polygynous; Nevertheless polygyny, whether in the form of polygamy or concubinage, could never, at any time or in any region, have been practiced by all the members of a tribe or people. As an examination of descriptions of

⁵⁸⁸ Syed Ameer Ali, p. 223.

polygynous peoples shows, **it is the privilege of the few**, partly because of the expense of supporting several women, partly because a universal polygyny would necessitate an enormous excess of females over males, and partly because, at the lower levels of civilization, the old and influential men (Australia) – good hunters, brave warriors, and head men – and, at higher levels, the rich and powerful – chiefs, kings, and men of rank – appropriate most of the women. Thus, through necessity, the bulk of the people, the poorer and often the younger men, are monogamous, whether they like it or not. Polygyny thus comes to be associated with the reputation of a warrior, with wealth, or with greatness. It becomes a sign of these, and also the test of wealth or consequence. This is true even of the Australian natives, with whom a man's riches are measured by the number of his wives, or, as among the Urabunna tribe, the number of a man's *piraungaru* women depends on his power and popularity. Thus polygyny becomes the privilege of the few, and is sometimes forbidden to the common people. On the other hand, where maintenance is easy, or **where, for any reason, there is a large surplus of women, it will be more widely diffused**. And, since at certain levels women are the labourers and food-providers, and are skillful in the numerous occupations of savage life, they are able to provide for themselves and for their lords, and all the men of the tribe will try to possess as many of them as possible in order to be maintained by them. Nevertheless, as a general rule, it is true that **polygyny is for the minority only, and is strictly proportioned to a man's prowess, wealth, or rank**. Thus, in Dahomey 'the king has thousands of wives, the nobles hundreds, others tens, while the soldier is unable to support one'; and among the South American Araucanians the poor and feeble must be celibates or monogamous, while others buy wives and procure concubines by raids. Statements like these regarding polygynous peoples are common – the people have one wife, chiefs, warriors, and kings have many wives and concubines, and in some cases they alone, or the wealthy, are allowed to possess them as among some N. and S. American tribes, some Ainu tribes, and the ancient Peruvians (Westermarck, p. 437; von Siebold, Suppl. To ZE, 1881, p. 31; s4 (6)).⁵⁸⁹

The universality of the institution is also evident from the following notes in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* which records that:

With the ancient *Mexicans*, *Mayas* and *Chibichas*, while a titular

⁵⁸⁹ *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. By James Hastings, Vol. III, p. 810. 'Concubinage'.

monogamy prevailed, especially among the poor, the rich and powerful practiced polygyny on a large scale. **Besides the first, the true and lawful wife, whose children alone inherited, there were lesser wives and numerous concubines. Nobles had as many as 800 concubines, and they were counted by thousands in the palaces of the monarch. To his favourites or to visitors the latter would make presents of these concubines, or he occasionally offered them as sacrificial victims.**⁵⁹⁰ In cohabiting with a concubine no ceremony was necessary, nor was her owner under any obligation to her.⁵⁹¹ Concubines were generally war captives, or girls and women taken from their homes, or children sold by their parents. Each province paid to the monarch a tribute of Indian women for sacrifice or slavery.⁵⁹²

Among the ancient *Germans* according to Tacitus (56-120 AD) (*Germ.* 18), **monogamy was customary, save among the nobles, who were polygamous.** This was also the case with the Scandinavians, though this polygyny probably meant marriage with one chief wife and union with lesser wives or concubines. Among the Scandinavians, especially in the later times of conquest, concubines were captives, often of noble rank, taken in war or raids, or foreign bondwomen, often from the East or Greece, bought in regular slave traffic. In the king's court there was usually a large train of fair captive women who acted as wine-bearers at banquets, and such, women were also found in lesser numbers in the houses of nobles. Kings gave presents of concubines to brave warriors, or one man offered 'gold-decked slaves' to another. (...) **The later Germanic kings and emperors and often the rich, even into Christian times, had wives and numerous concubines.** With the Germans the concubine had neither the

⁵⁹⁰ Islam has abrogated the cruel system of human sacrifice involving children, virgins, slaves or the concubines at all.

⁵⁹¹ In Islam, one is not free to have an intercourse with any of his concubines and leave her. If he indulges into an intercourse with any of the concubines she gets a permanent attachment with the master and no one else can touch her. The master is obliged to look after the woman like his wife and also children born out of their cohabitation. These children will enjoy parity of rights including inheritance and even the right to throne with other genuine descendants of the master or the king. No good believer can deny his issues from the concubine if any. Usually a concubine is accorded freedom by the master on the birth of a child. Alternatively she becomes automatically free on the death of the master.

⁵⁹² *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. III, p. 813. 'Concubinage'.

rank nor the privileges of the wife, nor had her children any claim to succession, though in Norse law the children of a concubine of 20 years' standing were capable of inheriting.⁵⁹³

In *Abyssinia*, the emperor has one wife, the *itighe*, and a large number of lesser wives or concubines, and **he has also the right to send for any woman who pleases him.**⁵⁹⁴ This is considered a great honour. His example is followed by the nobles and wealthy men, who, besides a wife, have many domestic concubines. Women taken in war are made concubines.⁵⁹⁵

In *India*, while the bulk of the People lived and still live in monogamy, polygyny has always been recognized and practiced by the rulers and wealthy, though it is prohibited by certain tribes and sub-castes, or is permitted in theory but practiced only in case of sterility, since the begetting of a son is all-important (...) The Vedas show that polygyny was practiced, though perhaps not commonly, and it included concubinage. (...), Brahmans and rich Kshatriyas (to the latter of whom the loosest forms of marriage were sanctioned) had lesser wives or concubines. **The case of the Brahman with four wives of different castes is contemplated, but the first wife must be of his own caste, and she had precedence over the others, hence they were in the position of superior concubines rather than wives, and their children received a lesser share of the inheritance.** The first marriage was regarded as more sacred, being contracted from a sense of duty, and not for mere self-gratification (...) By the law a Hindu may marry as many wives, and by custom keep as many concubines, as he may choose' (Balfour, *Cyclop. Of India*, London, 1885, iii. 252; Mayne, pp. 75, 372; Dubois, i. 211).⁵⁹⁶

Stressing on the existence of polygamy in the higher races, the Encyclopedia has explained that:

While monogamy was general among the people in Egypt **there was no restriction upon polygyny, and it flourished among the higher classes. Monogamy was binding upon the priests**, but some of them appear to have had concubines; a high priest c. 40 A.D. says: 'I had beautiful concubines' (Doid. Sic. i. 80; w. Max Muller, *Liebespoesie der*

⁵⁹³ *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. III, p. 813. 'Concubinage'.

⁵⁹⁴ In Islam, there is no provision that any Caliph, king or emir could call for any married woman or a virgin for sex. Such an act on his part will not only deprive him from his position but also be punishable under the Shariah Law.

⁵⁹⁵ *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. III, p. 813. 'Concubinage'.

⁵⁹⁶ *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, p. 814 'Concubinage'.

alten Agypter, Leipzig, 1899, p.5). Among the higher classes each wife had her own house, of which she was mistress; but they had different rights, according to their rank. Besides them were concubines - domestic slaves, or war captives, who had few rights. Kings had one chief wife – **the 'great spouse' or queen, often a sister**⁵⁹⁷ many lesser wives varying in rank, and innumerable concubines – foreign women, hostages, captives, or slaves.⁵⁹⁸

Among the Hebrews, though the bulk of the people were probably monogamous, polygamy and concubinage were permissible and provided for in the laws and were practiced by the well-to-do. The moving cause of polygyny was probably desire for offspring.⁵⁹⁹

In short, there had been various circumstances compelling the individuals and the societies at different times in the history of man which made the limited practice of polygamy necessary in the world. As such, there had been genuine reasons to justify polygamy. Instead of condemning it as something immoral, unnecessary or unlawful, it may be taken as a divinely permitted relaxation to meet various needs and obligations of certain people in the society. Since Islam has suggested extremely strict punishments for sex out of wedlock, therefore, the provision of polygamy has been made to save those did not like to violate the limits set by the law. Similarly, the polygamy provides the best solution to accommodate surplus women in the countries where they exceed over the men in the marriageable age. **It is only the polygamy that can fulfill the basic right of each and every woman to have her own husband, house and children in a respectable and lawful manner.**

Polygamy in the OT

Polygamy existed in the world even before Noah. According to Old Testament, Lamech the father of Noah had two wives i.e. Adah and Zillah:

And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my

⁵⁹⁷ The Qur'an has strictly forbidden to marry one's mother, sister, or a daughter to any believer in the world and many other near relatives as detailed in Al-Qur'an 4:23.

⁵⁹⁸ *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. III, p. 811. 'Concubinage'.

⁵⁹⁹ *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. III p. 812. 'Concubinage'.

voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt.⁶⁰⁰

And Lamech lived an hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son: And he called his name Noah, (...).⁶⁰¹

Polygamy prevailed in the world prior to the Law of Moses. The OT has, therefore, recorded many instances of the same. Terah, the father of Abraham, had two wives. (Gen. 11:26, 20:12). Similarly, Nahor, the brother of Abraham had married Milcah and Reumah. (Gen 22:20-24). Abraham also had two wives at a time i.e. Sarah and Hagar. (Gen 16:1-15). Esau son of Isaac married two Canaanite women and his third wife was Bashemath the daughter of Ishmael.

Now these are the generations of Esau, who is Edom. Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan; Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite; And Bashemath Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebajoth.⁶⁰²

Jacob, son of Isaac, had two wives i.e. Leah and Rachel, daughters of Laban, (Gen 29:15-35) and two concubines named Bilhah and Zilpah that he took as wives (Gen 30:3-13). Moses' first wife was named Zephora (Exo 2:21). He also married a Cushite (Num. 12:1). Elkanah had two wives; Hannah and Penaniah (1Sam 1:2), Ashhur had two wives Hela and Narah.⁶⁰³ Gideon had 70 sons which implies many wives (Jud. 8:29-31). Similarly, 40 sons of Abdon, son of Hillel also suggest that he had plurality of wives (Jud. 12:13-14). In short, we find more than forty examples of polygamy in the Old Testament, including prominent examples such as King David who had at least 9 wives; Mikal (1Sa 18:27), Achino'am (1Sa 25:43), Abigail (1Sa 25:30), Ma'akah (2Sa 3:3), Chaggith (2Sa 3:4), Abital (2Sa 3:4), Egelah (2Sa 3:5), Bathshu'a (1Chr 3:5), Bathsheba (2Sa 11:3) and indefinite number of concubines.

And David took him more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem, after he was come from Hebron: and there were yet sons and daughters born to David.⁶⁰⁴

⁶⁰⁰ Gen 4:23 KJV.

⁶⁰¹ Gen, 5:28 KJV.

⁶⁰² Gen, 36:1-3 KJV.

⁶⁰³ 1Chr 4:5.

⁶⁰⁴ 2Sam 5:13 KJV.

The Christians eulogize King David as son of God. He had been the most celebrated and ideal king of the Israelites. He was believed to be a prototype of **'the Messiah' also declared as 'the man after God's heart' 'which will fulfill all my will'**.⁶⁰⁵ About him, it had been recorded:

I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.⁶⁰⁶

Since David had many wives and concubines, therefore, plurality of wives can be taken as fulfillment of the will of God as highlighted above.

King Solomon the son of David married 700 wives. He also had 300 Concubines (1Ki. 11:1-4). About his son Rehoboam, it has been stated that:

And Rehoboam loved Maachah the daughter of Absalom above all his wives and his concubines: **(for he took eighteen wives, and threescore concubines;** and begat twenty and eight sons, and threescore daughters.)⁶⁰⁷

Abijah the son of Rehoboam had fourteen wives:

But Abijah waxed mighty, and married fourteen wives, and begat twenty and two sons, and sixteen daughters.⁶⁰⁸

The Lord God had expressly allowed polygamy and set rules for its practice (Exo 21:10-11, Deu 21:15-17, 25:5-7). Polygamy, therefore, did not come to an end during the entire reign of the Israelites e.g. Jehoiada the high-priest chose two wives for King Joash and they bore him sons and daughters (2Chr 24:2 GNB).

No limit had ever been imposed by the OT on the number of wives or the concubines one could possess among the Israelites. It is only the Deuteronomy which instructs the kings not to have large number of horses, wives or to accumulate wealth as quoted below:

But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply

⁶⁰⁵ 1Sa 13:14 & Acts 13:22 (KJV).

⁶⁰⁶ Psa 2:7 KJV.

⁶⁰⁷ 2Ch 11:21 KJV.

⁶⁰⁸ 2Ch, 13:21 KJV.

wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.⁶⁰⁹

The verse number 17 quoted above has been rendered by the Good News Bible in the Following Manner:

The king is not to have many wives, because this would make him turn away from the LORD; and he is not to make himself rich with silver and gold.⁶¹⁰

No doubt excess of everything must be avoided yet in case of marriages the Almighty left it to human choice to marry up to four women keeping in view the pressing needs and circumstances of each person. Instead of enjoining monogamy, the Deuteronomy, too, seems to permit multiplicity of wives. The instruction to the kings not to have many wives is a vague term. It keeps us bewildered to determine the figure meant by 'large number of horses' and 'many wives'. These instructions, however, did not apply to the masses of the Israelites. It is, however, surprising to observe that the Deuteronomy speaks of many wives, acquisition of large number of horses and richness through silver and gold in the same breath. **This parity of women with chattel is a great degradation for the female gender throughout the world.** No Divine Revelation could be expected to use such derogatory words for women.

It was perhaps an outcome of the Law of Moses and the history of the Israelites that the Talmudists formulated the rule that **no Jew may have more than four wives; kings may have at the most eighteen.**⁶¹¹ Although we fail to trace out any authority in the OT to support the number of wives suggested by the Talmudists, yet the same seems to have been the legacy of the Law of Moses and the history of the Israelites up to the advent of the

⁶⁰⁹ Deu 17:16-17 KJV.

⁶¹⁰ Deu, 17:17 GNB.

⁶¹¹ *Encyclopedia Biblica*, Vol. III, s.v. 'Marriage' p. 2946.

We must keep in mind here that Deuteronomy or Book of Law was discovered while repairing the Temple during the reign of King Josiah of Judah (649-609 B.C.). Its discovery in the 7th century B.C., therefore, has made many scholars skeptic about its contents. Some of the scholars ascribed its compilation to Ezra. All these references suggest its compilation much after the time of King Rehoboam son of Solomon. The limitation of wives for kings may, therefore, have been taken from the instance of Rehoboam who had 18 wives and 60 concubines.

Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ because Jesus had suggested no amendment in the same.

The Encyclopedia Biblica, however, explains that:

The law of the Kingdom forbidding the possession of many wives has manifestly a side-reference to the actual king (Dt. 17:17). The Talmudists formulate the rule that no Jew may have more than four wives; **kings may have at the most eighteen**. The ordinary Israelite at all times, like the modern Syrian peasant, would doubtless have to be content with one secondary wife in addition to the principal wife, or at most with two wives. The last-named arrangement seems to receive the sanction of widely-diffused custom (1s.1:2, Dt. 21:15, 2Ch. 24:3; cp the case of Jacob). When the first wife proved childless, polygamy, to this extent at least, was regarded as necessity.⁶¹²

The Jewish as well as the Christian missionaries and scholars must, therefore, keep in mind the afore-stated history and the law of the Israelites before they start criticizing the marriages of the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as the last prophet of the Lord. His marriages had not only been necessitated by the circumstance of his time but some of them had been solemnized to reform the marital laws prevailing throughout the world. We have, therefore, discussed the same in detail in the 2nd Volume of the Book.

The Old Testament is the earliest record of law and faith extant today. All the Prophets of Israel after Moses including Jesus Christ himself and the Christians must accept the OT as the primary part of their law and faith. Jesus Christ himself declared that:

Do not think that I have come to do away with the Law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets. I have not come to do away with them, but to make their teachings come true. Remember that as long as heaven and earth last, not the least point nor the smallest detail of the Law will be done away with---not until the end of all things. So then, whoever disobeys even the least important of the commandments and teaches others to do the same, will be least in the Kingdom of heaven. On the other hand, whoever obeys the Law and teaches others to do the same, will be great in the Kingdom of

⁶¹² Encyclopedia Biblica, Vol. III, 'Marriage' p. 2946.

heaven.⁶¹³

Keeping in view the contents of the OT, the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not transgress the limits prescribed by the Jewish law. The Jews and the Christians, therefore, have no grounds to criticize him.

Polygamy in other Nations

According to Syed Ameer Ali, the Roman State had perhaps prevented the introduction of legal polygamy at the commencement of its existence but in their surrounding states and especially **among the Etruscans, polygamy was a privileged custom**. Mr. Joyce writes that:

Marriage soon became a **simple practice of promiscuous concubinage**. Concubinage recognised by the laws of the State acquired the force of a privileged institution. The freedom of women, the looseness of the tie which bound them to men, **the frequency with which wives were changed or transferred, betoken in fact the prevalence of polygamy, only under a different name.**⁶¹⁴

It has been recorded that:

In China, besides the chief wife, one or more secondary but legitimate wives or concubines are a recognized institution, the ceremony of marriage being gone through with the first only, who must be of the husband's rank. Bigamy, or raising a concubine to the rank of wife during the lifetime of the wife, is illegal, **but a man whose wife reaches the age of 40 without having children must take a concubine for the sake of the ancestral cult**. The secondary wives must obey the chief wife, who calls the man 'husband' while they call him 'master'; but she is not expected to show jealousy of them and, as popular poetry insists, should provide for their comfort. They are of inferior station, and, as they are usually purchased, they are mainly a luxury of the rich. **They may be repudiated without any formality, or sold again by their owner**. Poor parents freely sell their daughters as concubines - this being legal in China - either directly to rich men or to men who trade in concubines, and who educate them and re-sell them at a high price. (...) In ancient Japan, though wife, mistress, and concubine were terms which were not distinguished, an occasional distinction is drawn in the texts between the chief wife and secondary wives or concubines, of whom she sometimes shows jealousy, while they are of lesser

⁶¹³ Mat 5:17-19 GNB.

⁶¹⁴ Syed Ameer Ali, p. 224.

rank. **In later times the position of the wife became that of the wife in China, while concubinage was legalized, the law specifying the number of concubines a man might have according to his rank.**⁶¹⁵

Among the Hindus, polygamy prevailed from the earliest times. It also existed in the ancient Medes, Babylonians, Assyrians, Persians, Thracians, Lydian and Pelagian races settled in Europe and Western Asia. In the states surrounding ancient Rome and especially among the Etruscans, plurality of marriage was a privileged custom. The historians, therefore, record that:

The emancipation of women was accompanied by a relaxation or even a frank **abandonment of the traditional code of family solidarity**. The tying and severing of matrimonial knots as a means of acquiring wealth or useful political connexions was elevated by the Roman nobility to a fine art. In the pursuit of political promotion matches were made and unmade with the utmost unconcern for its effects on family life. **Sulla had five wives, Pompey five, Caesar four, Octavian three.**⁶¹⁶

Although the **Greeks** claimed to be monogamists yet in their practical lives, they **practiced monogamy tempered with adultery**. Reportedly **Socrates had two wives**, but the poor culprit had as much reason to repent of his temerity as Euripides.⁶¹⁷

The practice of polygamy among the barbarian kings was also for some centuries unchecked, or at least unsuppressed by Christianity. **The kings Caribert⁶¹⁸ and Chilperic⁶¹⁹ had**

⁶¹⁵ *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. III, p. 813-814. 'Concubinage'.

⁶¹⁶ M. Cary, *A History of Rome*, 2nd edition, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967), p. 456-57. Lucius Cornelius Sulla Felix (c. 138 BC – 78 BC), was a Roman general and statesman. Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus (106 BC–48 BC), was a military and political leader of the late Roman Republic.

⁶¹⁷ *The history of Women* by William Alexander, Vol. II, p. 282. Euripides (c. 480 – 406 BC) was an ancient Greek tragedian of classical Athens. He had two disastrous marriages and both his wives—Melite and Choerine (the latter bearing him three sons)—were unfaithful. He became a recluse, making a home for himself in a cave on Salamis.

⁶¹⁸ Charbert I (517-567 AD) was a Merovingian King of Paris.

⁶¹⁹ Chilperic I (539-584 AD) was king of Neustria.

both many wives at the same time. Clothaire⁶²⁰ married the sister of his first wife during the lifetime of the latter,⁶²¹ who, on the intention of the king being announced, is reported to have said, 'Let my lord do what seemeth good in his sight, only let thy servant live in thy favour.'⁶²²

Syed Ameer Ali writes that:

The corruptness of morals in Persia about the time of the Prophet was fearful. There was no recognised law of marriage, or, if any existed, it was completely ignored. **In the absence of any fixed rule in the Zend-Avesta as to the number of wives a man might possess, the Persians indulged in a multitude of regular matrimonial connections, besides having a number of concubines.**⁶²³

The practice of polygamy was also continued by certain Christian monarchs.

St. Columbanus⁶²⁴ was expelled from Gaul chiefly on account of his denunciations of the polygamy of King Thierry (654-691). Dagobert⁶²⁵ had three wives, as well as a multitude of concubines. Charlemagne⁶²⁶ himself had at the same time two wives, and he indulged largely in concubines. After this period examples of this nature became rare. The popes and the bishops exercised a strict supervision over domestic morals, and strenuously, and in most cases successfully, opposed the attempts of kings and nobles to repudiate their wives.⁶²⁷

⁶²⁰ It is perhaps Chlothar I (r. 511-558 AD) a king of the Franks of the Merovingian dynasty.

⁶²¹ Chlothar I had died about 13 years before the birth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Islam strictly forbade marrying two sisters at a time (Al-Qur'an 4:23).

⁶²² William Edward Hartpole Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, p. 363.

⁶²³ Syed Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam*, p. 227.

⁶²⁴ Columbanus (543-615) was an Irish missionary notable for founding a number of monasteries on the European continent from around 590 in the Frankish and Lombard kingdoms in France and Italy.

⁶²⁵ Dagobert I was the king of Austrasia (r. 623-634).

⁶²⁶ Charlemagne (742-814 A.D.) also known as Charles the Great, was King of the Franks who united most of Western Europe during the Middle Ages and laid the foundations for modern France and Germany. He also became king of Italy from 774, and from 800 **was the first recognized Roman emperor in Western Europe** since the collapse of the Western Roman Empire three centuries earlier.

⁶²⁷ William Edward Hartpole Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, p. 363-364.

Polygamy in Hinduism, Pagan Arabs & others

According to Vishnu Smirti, a Brahman may take four wives in the direct order of the four castes.

Some texts give us the exact strength of king's harem. In the Vivagasuya we are told of **king Mahasena who had one thousand wives. Prince Sihasena had had only five hundred** but they proved more troublesome than the one thousand.⁶²⁸

It has been recorded that Maharaja Dasrat the father of Sri Ramchandra Jee had three wives. Sri Krishn Jee or Kristna, the supreme deity or supreme personality of Godhead among the Hindus had thousands of them.

Krishna had eight princely wives, also known as Ashtabharya: Rukmini, Satyabhama, Jambavati, Nagnajiti, Kalindi, Mitravinda, Bhadra, Lakshmana) and the other 16,100 or 16,000 (number varies in scriptures), who were rescued from Narakasura. They had been forcibly kept in his palace and after Krishna had killed Narakasura, he rescued these women and freed them. **Krishna married them all to save them from destruction and infamy. He gave them shelter in his new palace and a respectful place in society.** The chief amongst them is Rohini.

The Bhagavata Purana, Vishnu Purana, Harivamsa list the children of Krishna from the Ashtabharya with some variation; while Rohini's sons are interpreted to represent the unnumbered children of his junior wives. Most well-known among his sons are Pradyumna, the eldest son of Krishna (and Rukmini) and Samba, the son of Jambavati, whose actions led to the destruction of Krishna's clan.⁶²⁹

Polygamy in Christianity and the West

Jesus Christ lived only for 33 or 36 years and died before attaining the age of 40 years at which the Prophets used to marry. He also had no settled life or a regular place to live due to which, he died without marrying any woman. Jesus, however, neither forbade the people to marry nor did he put any limit on the number of wives. **Chapter 25 of Mathew contains the parable of ten girls or virgins**

⁶²⁸ *Woman's Plight*, p. 241, quoted from Thomas, P., *Indian Women Through the Ages*: (Bombay: Asia Publishing House 1964), p. 114.

⁶²⁹ *Wikipedia*.

aspiring marriage with the bridegroom. Due to shortage of oil in their lamps, five of them had gone to buy oil while the other five went in with the bridegroom to the marriage and the door was shut.⁶³⁰ It is obvious from the parable mentioned above that Jesus had no objection to marriage of ten or five girls with the bridegroom.

From the examples quoted above, it transpires that polygamy prevailed as a universal institution throughout the world since time immemorial. No religious scripture in the world including the Upanishads, the Avesta, the Old Testament, New Testament and other books had ever prohibited polygamy. There also had been no limit on the wives one could marry at a time.

As regards St. Paul, he was more inclined towards asceticism and the Roman Law than observing the Law of the Lord. Wikipedia comments that:

Both Jesus and Paul seem to view marriage as a legitimate calling from God for Christians. Paul elevates singleness to that of the preferable position, but does offer a caveat suggesting this is "because of the impending crisis"—which could itself extend to present times (see also Pauline privilege). Paul's primary issue was that marriage adds concerns to one's life that detract from their ability to serve God without distraction.⁶³¹

⁶³⁰ Mat 25:10.

⁶³¹ 1Corinthians 7:1,7-9,17,26-28,38,40, (from Wikipedia). We, however, observe that St. Paul was not a prophet of the Lord and also failed to quote a single verse from Jesus Christ. His teachings, therefore, are against the natural instincts of man. The Almighty had in fact created man with such attributes that he had to spend lot of his time on earning his living to arrange for his shelter protect him from various types of dangers, to procreate children as per commandment of the Lord and to attend to hundreds of other requirements. It was in these circumstances that the Lord had intended to test and try him. God wanted to observe how humankind fulfilled their requirements abiding by the law of the Lord. Humankind had, therefore, to be tested under the stress and strain of all these things. Had the Lord desired that humankind may devote their entire time only to worship the Almighty, He would not have created him with sex, hunger, thirst and requirements for numerous other things. As such, those who devote entirely to the worship of the Lord avoiding all their responsibilities enjoined by Him such as to earn their livings, marrying the women and looking after the families, to do justice and observe charity etc. are playing foul with the Almighty who had decided to test and try them as

Paul goes even to the extent of recommending celibacy than marriage. His misconception about the end times and asceticism advises even the married people to remain as if they are unmarried. He says:

26. I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be. **27.** Art thou bound unto a wife? Seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? Seek not a wife. **28.** But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you. **29.** But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; **30.** And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; **31.** And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away. **32.** But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: **33.** But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. **34.** There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. **The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit:** but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. **35.** And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction. **36.** But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry. **37.** Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well. **38.** So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better.⁶³²

It is pertinent to note here that the passage quoted above contains only the opinion of St. Paul and has nothing to do with the commandments of the Lord. He was a self claimed apostle of Jesus Christ who through his own visions became extremely authoritative theologian among the western

normal human beings fully involved in fulfilling their worldly responsibilities.

⁶³² 1Co 7:26-38 KJV.

Christendom. His preachings, therefore, abrogate most of the commandments of the Lord that conflict with the Greco-Roman faiths, mythology, traditions and customs. In spite of all this, the Christians accord more value to the teachings of St. Paul as against the confirmed commandments of the Almighty and the preachings of Jesus Christ.

Paul is severely mistaken to advise human beings to adopt the pattern of the angels billions of whom had already been serving the Lord without any distraction for unknown billions of years. The purpose of God's creation of man with new attributes such as thirst, hunger, fatigue, rest, inclinations, lusts, needs and mortality was much different from the creation of the angels. The Lord in fact had decided to try man in such a manner that he was compelled to fulfill thousands of his needs which were unknown to the angels. **In case man avoids the natural obligations to marry and multiply, to strive for earning his living, providing sustenance and shelter to his children, dealing with the people around him including his own clan and abstains from all the gifts bestowed on him by the Almighty, he will be ingrate to the Lord and a renegade from the duties imposed on him.** Human beings are required to serve the Lord while abiding by all His commandments along with fulfilling all the responsibilities imposed on them. Turning away from the field of struggle enjoined by the Lord and refusing to take on them the natural and complex responsibilities as a man on earth, they violate the primary conditions of test and trial by the Almighty. While all the prophets of the Lord had been trying to earn their livings themselves, the Christian pontiffs and priests had become divines while all the community was bound to serve them and pay part of their earnings to finance the luxurious lives led by them.

Such priests or pontiffs live pompously on the earnings of the others without contributing anything to improve the fate of society. Even so they enjoy vast authority through self acquired holiness and the power to forgive sins of the laity. As such, they themselves became gods who started forgiving sins of the people and selling indulgences to the innocent folks w.e.f. the beginning of the Crusades. The confessions provided them with accurate information about the wrongs done by the people. The information received

during the confessions was very often utilized to choose their victims from those who confessed their guilt before them. All this is being done in the name of God and Jesus Christ who never had allowed them to know inequities and the secrets of other members of the society. The nefarious system of confession, therefore, placed women and children at the disposal of the priests who always continued to abuse many of them.

As regards the Christians, they seem to have diverged from the Old Testament and the Jewish Law by adopting monogamy as the only form of marriage. They did this to accord with the traditions of the Greco-Roman Empire. It is said that monogamy was a peculiarity of Greeks who did not regard their wives as slaves. The Romans, too, seem to have followed the traditions of the Greeks. With expansion of Roman Power, therefore, monogamy was adopted as a law among the Christians. Perhaps the earliest instructions for one wife among the Christians start from 1Timothy as quoted below:

Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.⁶³³

About the elders of the church, it has been written:

If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.⁶³⁴

We have already discussed that Jesus came to rehearse and confirm the law in the Old Testament which contains at least 40 instances of polygamy. Jesus neither denounced the practice nor did he prohibit it. **The Jewish historian Josephus also referred to polygamy twice as a recognized institution of the Jews.**⁶³⁵ Romans, however, did not allow their citizens to practice polygamy. In 285 AD a constitution of Diocletian and Maximian interdicted polygamy to all subjects of the empire without exception. Even during this period, the Israelites had been the most polygamous nation in the world. It was in 393 AD that Theodosius issued a special law to compel the Jews to

⁶³³ 1Ti 3:12 KJV.

⁶³⁴ Tit 1:6 KJV.

⁶³⁵ Joyce, George (1933). *Christian Marriage: An Historical and Doctrinal Study*. Sheed and Ward. p. 560 cited by Wikipedia.

relinquish this national custom of polygamy. Most of the subjects of the Roman Empire thereafter became monogamous to conform to the Roman law. The problem for the Christians, however, had been that they found no prohibition of polygamy in their scriptures. Many Christians had been believing in tighter marriage restrictions for the priests on the basis of the following:

A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;⁶³⁶

It has been an accepted fact that the scriptures did not prohibit polygamy. The Christian fathers, however, had to form a compatibility with the law in the Roman Empire. They, therefore, prohibited polygamy in spite of the fact that they had no biblical leg to stand on. Similarly, divorce in the early Romans was unheard of. It has been stated that:

In the forms of marriage, however, which were usual in the earlier periods of Rome, **the absolute power passed into the hand of the husband, and he had the right, in some cases, of putting her to death.**⁶³⁷ Law and public opinion combined in making matrimonial purity most strict. **For five hundred and twenty years, it was said, there was no such thing as a divorce in Rome,** and even after this example, for many years the marriage tie was regarded as absolutely indissoluble.⁶³⁸

It is, therefore, obvious that the early Christians in the Roman Empire had to accord with the Greco-Roman practice and law about marriage as well as divorce. **This was perhaps the reason that Mathew attributed prohibition of divorce to Jesus Christ** (Mat 19:3-11, 10:2-12) and through the apostles like St. Paul they undermined the marriage and disapproved sex even within lawful means. This also was used as basis for the celibacy of the priests in Christianity. For details, please refer to our chapter on *Celibacy and Monasticism*.

The Greco-Roman hatred towards polygamy was the product of their culture. **They pretended to be**

⁶³⁶ 1Ti 3:2 KJV.

⁶³⁷ In Islam, one could kill his wife only under the pain of death. Islam in fact prohibited even to slap one's wife on her face.

⁶³⁸ William Edward Hartpole Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, (New York, D. Appleton and Company, 1871), pp. 317.

monogamous which was tempered with adultery on a large scale. The Greeks as well as the Romans were accustomed to honor with the crown of modesty those who were content with one marriage and to regard many marriages as a sign of illegitimate intemperance.⁶³⁹ Love and sex out of wed-lock, however, could never be taken as a cognizable offence as prescribed in the Old Testament.

Among the Romans it was not due to any religious proscription but a matter of sagacity that they avoided multiple marriages so that the property of a man may not get subdivided into small pieces due to numerous children born out of different wives. As regards sexual needs, there had been no hindrance in the Greeks or the Romans to gratify the same through unlawful friendly affairs, prostitutes or the concubines. The kings and the wealthy people were always free to keep mistresses, concubines or to satisfy their lust outside the bonds of marriage. One wife was, therefore, more than enough for them.

Jewish polygamy clashed with Roman monogamy at the time of the early Church. It was by the way of advice that 1Tim 3:2, 1Tim 3:12 and Tit 1:6 suggested that the 'church leaders should be the husband of but one wife'. Subsequently, the Christian fathers like Justin the Martyr, Irenaeus and Tertullian started speaking against Polygamy. In spite of all this, there had been no strict prohibition for the priests, the kings and ordinary Christians to adopt polygamy as per their own requirements. Hence, up to the time of Constantine the Great there seems no bar on marrying more than one woman.

(...) and the practice of Constantine and his son both of whom had several wives. The emperor Valentinian II, (371-392) by an edict, allowed all the subjects of the empire, if they pleased, to marry several wives; nor does it appear from the ecclesiastical history of those times that the bishops and the heads of the Christian Churches made any objection to this law. Far from it, all the succeeding emperors practised polygamy, and the people generally were not remiss in following their example.⁶⁴⁰

⁶³⁹ William Edward Hartpole Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, pp. 344.

⁶⁴⁰ Syed Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam*, p. 226.

This shows that during the earlier centuries of Christianity, polygamy continued to flourish in more or less pronounced forms until **forbidden by law of Justinian I (482-565)**. Even the Praetorian Edict did not succeed to remedy the practice of polygamy in the society. It continued to exist here and there till the time of Gregory the Great.⁶⁴¹

The Byzantine Emperor Leo the Wise (r. 886-912 AD) is conspicuous in this respect because he had four wives. Even subsequently, some of the kings and the rich people among the Christians had been having more than one wives or a large number of concubines besides mistresses in their houses. William Alexander, therefore, reports that:

Polygamy seems not to have been entirely eradicated among the Christians in the sixth century, as we find it then enacted in canons of one of their councils, that if any one is married to many wives he shall do penance. Even the clergy themselves, in this period, practised bigamy, as we find it ordained by another council held at Narbonne, that such clergymen as were bigamists, should only be presbyters and deacons, and should not be allowed to marry and consecrate. But our astonishment is still more excited, to **find instances of bigamy and polygamy so late as the sixteenth century.**⁶⁴²

William Alexander further records that:

The famous **Jack of Leyden**⁶⁴³, who is so well known in history, pretending himself to be a prophet and a king, thought that in the article of women he had a right to follow the example of the kings of Israel, **by taking as many wives as he thought proper, and actually proceeded so far as to marry seventeen**, and had he not been cut short in the career of his glory and fanaticism, would probably have married twice that number.⁶⁴⁴

⁶⁴¹ 540 A.D. to 604 A.D.

⁶⁴² William Alexander, *The History of Women*, Vol. II, (Dublin: J.A. Husband, 1779), p. 282.

⁶⁴³ The author seems to have mis-spelt the name. The true name was John of Leiden (1509-1536) who was an Anabaptist Leader of Dutch city of Leiden. In 1533 c.e, he moved to German city of Munster and proclaimed himself a prophet king of Munster. He set up there Polygamous Theocracy. **He himself took 16 wives aside from his Queen Divara Van Haarlem. The Roman Catholic troops took over Munster in 1535 and executed him.**

⁶⁴⁴ William Alexander, *The History of Women*, Vol. II, p. 285.

Although polygamy had been a regular practice among many of the prophets and other people during the time of the prophets before Jesus Christ and many Christian kings, lords and rich people for first five or six centuries after the death of Jesus Christ yet the same stood banned subsequently by the Christian pontiffs and the councils. It must, however, be noted that the **Christian concept of Christ's marriage with the church has no meaning at all**. Similarly, the concept that the Christians were 'the limbs of the Christ' is also a product of the Christian fathers having no concern with the teachings of Jesus.

Mr. Lecky observes that:

The Montanists and the Novatians absolutely condemned second marriages.' The orthodox pronounced them lawful, on account of the weakness of human nature, but they viewed them with the most emphatic disapproval, partly because they considered them manifest signs of incontinence, and partly because they regarded them as inconsistent with their doctrine that marriage is an emblem of the union of Christ with the Church.⁶⁴⁵ (...) Thus – to give but a few samples – bigamy, or second marriage, is described by Athanagoras as **'a decent adultery; 'fornication,'⁶⁴⁶ according to Clement of Alexandria, 'is a lapse from one marriage into many.'** 'The first Adam,' said St. Jerome, 'had one wife; the second Adam had no wife.'⁶⁴⁷ They who approve of bigamy hold forth a third Adam, who was twice married, whom they follow.' 'Consider,' he again says, 'that **she who has been twice married, though she be an old, and decrepit, and poor woman, is not deemed worthy to receive the charity of the Church.**'⁶⁴⁸ But if the bread of

⁶⁴⁵ The doctrine that marriage is an emblem of the union of Christ with the church is a self-conceived dogma of St. Paul and his followers. It has nothing to do with the teachings of the Christ or revelations of the Lord. Those who abide by this doctrine may, therefore, expect their reward from St. Paul instead of the Almighty.

⁶⁴⁶ If we believe Athanagoras of Athens (c. 133-190) and Clement of Alexandria (150-215 AD) as correct then the Holy Prophets of the Lord like Jacob, Moses and David will all be condemnable as adulterous and fornicators.

⁶⁴⁷ By 2nd Adam they mean Jesus Christ which has no justification or reality in it.

⁶⁴⁸ We do not know the basis on which St. Jerome prohibited charity of the church for those women who had married twice even though they be old and decrepit. As against this, Islam prefers married life over living alone. Charities are permissible for all poverty stricken

charity is taken from her, how much more that bread which descends from heaven!⁶⁴⁹

The long passage continues in the following:

By this text,' said St. Gregory Nazianzen, speaking of St. Paul's comparison of marriage to the union of Christ with the Church second marriages seem to me to be reprov'd. If there are two Christs there may be two husbands or two wives. If there is but one Christ, one Head of the Church, there is but one flesh a second is repelled. But if he forbids a second, what is to be said of third marriages? The first is law, the second is pardon and indulgence, the third is iniquity; but he who exceeds this number is manifestly bestial.⁶⁵⁰ The collective judgment of the ecclesiastical authorities on this subject is shown by the rigid exclusion of bigamists from the priesthood, and from all claim to the charity of the Church, and by the decrees of more than one Council, which ordained that a period of penance should be imposed upon all who married a second time, before they were admitted to communion.⁶⁵¹

Lecky also records that:

Among the Greeks fourth marriages were at one time deemed absolutely unlawful, and much controversy was excited by the **Emperor Leo the Wise**, [Byzantine Emperor 886-912 A.D.] **who, having had three wives, had taken a mistress**, but

women whether married divorced or widows. It was to remove the stigma of profanity or illfatedness from the widows or the divorced women that instead of marrying virgins the Prophet of Islam preferred to marry and protect widows or divorced women. Most of the women accommodated by him were either twice divorced or widowed. Some had suffered both from divorce as well widowhood. No other religious leader had ever protected the widows of his closest relatives martyred in the religious combats or assimilated other widows in the society to equate them with the virgins or other women of the noble birth.

⁶⁴⁹ Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, pp. 345-346. The Christians forget that Almighty Allah is most gracious and most merciful sustainer of the entire universe. He, therefore, does not deprive any of His creatures from his charity during the earthly life.

⁶⁵⁰ This means that according to St. Gregory Nazianzen the venerable Prophets of the Lord like Jacob, David, Solomon and a large number of Israelites as well as the Christians marrying many women at a time were all among the beasts. Let such people reconsider the Bible saying to David: a prototype of the Messiah 'the man after God's heart' 'which will fulfill all my will' about whom, it had been recorded that:

"I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee (Psa 2:7 KJV).

⁶⁵¹ Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, pp. 346-347.

afterwards, in defiance of the religious feelings of his people, determined to raise her to the position of a wife.⁶⁵²

Mr. Lecky observes that by purifying and dignifying marriage, **Protestantism has conferred a great benefit upon women**, yet its complete suppression of conventual system was very far from benefit to women or to the world. **He praised the institutions that furnished a shelter for many women who 'from poverty or domestic unhappiness or other causes found themselves cast alone and unprotected into the battle of life which would secure them from the temptations to crosswise and from the extremities of suffering and to convert them into agents of active organized intelligent agents of charity.** He says:

Such an institution would be almost free from the objections that may justly be urged against monasteries, which withdraw strong men from manual labour, and it would largely mitigate the difficulty of providing labour and means of livelihood for single women, which is one of the most pressing, in our own day one of the most appalling, of social problems. Most unhappily for mankind, this noble conception was from the first perverted. Institutions that might have had an incalculable philanthropic value were based upon the principle of asceticism, which makes the sacrifice, not the promotion, of earthly happiness its aim, **and binding vows produced much misery and not a little vice.** The convent became the perpetual prison of the daughter whom a father was disinclined to endow, or of young girls who, under the impulse of a transient enthusiasm, or of a transient sorrow, took a step which they never could retrace, and useless penances and contemptible superstitions wasted the energies that might have been most beneficially employed.⁶⁵³

Although, Mr. Lecky being a Christian could ill-afford to recommend polygamy as a remedy to the illfatedness of the widows, of the divorced as well as unmarried women yet his observations seem to favor bigamy or polygamy to rescue the women unmarried, widowed or divorced. Hence, polygamy to the extent of accommodating the helpless and deserted women must be allowed to provide shelter, sustenance and social status to these victims of

⁶⁵² William Edward Hartpole Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, pp. 347.

⁶⁵³ Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, pp. 391-392.

illfatedness. Islam, therefore, allows polygamy only as a solution to the problem of loneliness and destitution faced by the widows, unmarried or divorced women provided the men desire it for chastity than lust (Al-Qur'an 4:24).

There is no virtue in celibacy, virginity or seclusion from the society simply because the LORD did not enjoin the same on human beings. We on the other hand find in the Exodus that:

If he take him another wife; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish.⁶⁵⁴

The Qur'an enjoins marriage for mutual love and satisfaction between the sexes to ensure complementarity of both. The Institution of marriage is more beneficial to women than men. While **men can love and leave**, the women are naturally obliged to bear the consequences of the sexual union. It is with the said purpose that Islam tolerates no sex outside conjugal relationships. According to Islam, it is praiseworthy and virtuous for men to marry women. On the other hand, it abhors all type of sex, without marriage as enjoined by the LORD.

Polygamy of Dahomey Kings

Dahomey is known as the Republic of Benin since 1975. It had been a kingdom 1600-1894 when French converted it into their protectorate or a colony.⁶⁵⁵ The territory covers about 114,763 km². The country is situated in West Africa. It is bordered by Togo to the west, Nigeria to the east, and Burkina Faso and Niger to the north. Dahomey has a small southern coastline of the Bight of Benin part of the Gulf of Guinea in the northernmost tropical portion of the Atlantic Ocean. From 1904 to 1958 Dahomey/ Benin had been a French colony and part of French West Africa. The Total population consists of about 9 million people. It has been reported that Dahomey kings had unlimited number of wives during the kingdom period.

The king has thousands of wives, the nobles hundreds, others tens; while the soldier is unable to support one. If one of the wives of the king, or a high officer's, commits adultery, the

⁶⁵⁴ Exo 21:10 KJV.

⁶⁵⁵ In 1894, the last chief Behanzin was defeated by the French and the country was annexed into the French colonial empire.

culprits are summarily beheaded; and the skull of one of the Agaou's wives is at present exposed in the square of the palace of Agrimgomeh, in Abomey⁶⁵⁶.⁶⁵⁷

The multiplicity of wives enjoyed by the king and his officers, and the selection and separation of thousands of virgins as amazons, leave but few females wherewith to increase the population; whilst the hundreds of thousands of skulls that ornament the palaces, the annual introduction of 60,000 slaves into Brazil, at the exportation of at least 180,000 from Africa, unite in tending to decrease the numbers of the people rapidly....⁶⁵⁸

Polygamy Co-Existed with Monogamy

Norman Haire has written that:

"it is extremely doubtful whether, at any period of the world's history, true monogamy, faithfully observed by both sexes equally, has ever actually prevailed. It is much less doubtful that, during at least the latter half of the so-called Christian era, the institution of monogamy has been a convenient fiction based upon a double standard of morality which in its turn has been at once the chief course and the chief consequence of the subjection of women. It is most certain of all that, in the present age of unsure and transitional standards, the actual practice of monogamy, as this is understood by Church and State, is virtually non-existent"⁶⁵⁹

Polygamy exists even in the latest religions such as Sikhism. The founder of Sikh Empire i.e. Maharaja Ranjeet Singh had four proper wives and 7 concubines who committed themselves to Suttee at his death in 1839. Similarly, five women joined the funeral pyre of Maharaja Basant Singh. When Raja Suchet Sing died in 1846, 300 women committed to Suttee.⁶⁶⁰

Although polygamy had never been adopted on a large scale yet it has always co-existed with monogamy or

⁶⁵⁶ The capital of the kingdom of Dahomey.

⁶⁵⁷ Frederick E. Forbes, *Dahomey and the Dahomans*, (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1851), Vol. I, p. 25-26.

⁶⁵⁸ Frederick E. Forbes, *Dahomey and the Dahomans*, Vol. I, p. 137-138.

⁶⁵⁹ *Woman's Plight*, p. 243, quoted from *Sexual Reforms Congress* by Haire, Norman, (London: Broadway House, 1930), p. 40.

⁶⁶⁰ Wikipedia, *Sati (Practice)*.

bigamy. There being no reliable statistics about the same, we assess that in Pakistan only 2 % of the people may have been bigamous. As regards four wives, one could hardly find 2 or three persons in a population of 100,000 people. Mostly it had been the privilege of a few rich people with good health or those who did not have male offspring from their first wives. It was only due to compelling circumstances that certain people had no recourse except polygamy. Polygamy on a limited scale has, therefore, always existed in different societies of the world, especially among the kings, the rich people, and others due to special circumstances faced by them. As regards monogamy it had been the practice of the overwhelming majority of the people and especially in those communities where men and women had almost been equal in numbers. Strict monogamy covering 100% population of a country had never existed in any part of the world. Western Nations today boast of monogamy but according to Gustave Le Bon, **the custom of monogamy there "is a mere farce and a shallow formality which is inscribed only in law books, whereas in actual social life, there is no trace of it"**. According to him:

Polygyny has existed in the Orient in a legal form, that is, an acceptance of a marriage contract with woman and of paternal responsibility for her children, **while in the west it has had a hypocritical and illegal form, in the form of indulging in intimate associations with girl-friends and lovers without entering into marriage contract with the woman, and without having any responsibility as a father for her children.**⁶⁶¹

Although Judaism and Christianity today boast only to be monogamous but the same is a farce than a reality of life. Violations of the law whether open or secret are numerous which cannot be detailed here. Mr. Moon Arif Rehman of India, therefore, observes that:

However, it is not correct that Judaism and Christianity have always been monogamous or categorically opposed to polygyny, not even today. We are informed by some prominent Jewish scholars, e.g. Goitein (pp. 184-85), that polygynous Jewish immigrants cause the Israeli housing authorities a great deal of both difficulty and embarrassment.

⁶⁶¹ Quoted by Murtada Mutrahhari, *The Rights of Women in Islam*, (Tehran: World Organization for Islamic Services, 1981), p. 332.

The position of the Christian Mormons is well known. So is the view of Afro-Asian bishops who prefer polygyny to infidelity, fornication, and wife-swapping. In the United States alone, wife-swappers are estimated to number hundreds of thousands. **It will be revealing to examine the high correlation between strict formal monogamy and the frequency of prostitution, homosexuality, illegitimacy, infidelity, and general sexual laxity.** The historical record of the Greek-Roman and the Jewish-Christian civilizations is even more revealing in this respect, as any standard sociological history of the family will show.⁶⁶²

As against the above, Islam strictly forbids sex out of a lawful marriage and treats it as a capital crime punishable with stoning to death for the married offenders or flogging up to hundred lashes to the unmarried ones (Al-Qur'an 24:2). Islam has no provision for love and friendship leading to fornication. Strict chastity of men as well as women, therefore, ensures the lineage for inheritance so that no premarital or post-marital adventures may procreate bastards in the society.

Normally, a woman seeks a husband to love her, to grant her a social status, to protect her and to provide sustenance for her and the offspring born through the marriage. Only a marriage bond can grant her all such securities. Lovers and friends take no responsibility of children born from a girlfriend or a prostitute. Such men and women can neither have a permanent attachment with each other nor can they form a family unit. The fear of fifties, therefore, continues to lurk in the mind of each woman who remains unmarried up to 30-35 years of age. In Islam no one is above law nor can anyone enjoy the privilege of promiscuity. As such, those who have unhealthy or barren wives can marry one or more wives in accordance with their circumstances. Those bestowed with more sexual vitality and the means to afford maintenance of more women can marry up to four wives at a time. The relaxation to such people primarily aims at accommodating widows or divorced women and to prevent adultery and fornication in the society. Polygamy to a limited extent has, therefore, been allowed in different societies of the world to

⁶⁶² Moon Arif Rehman, *Feminism in Islam*, (New Delhi: Gali Murari Lal, Ansari Road, 2015), p. 292.

meet the dire needs of certain people and to avoid immoralities among others.

POLYGAMY II

It is evident from our discussion in the preceding chapter that bigamy or polygamy had always coexisted with monogamy in all nations of the world. Prior to Islam, no revealed religion or a society had put any limit on the number of wives one could marry at a time. Religious nobilities like Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines. The Hindu deity Krishna had 16000 or 16100 consorts. King Mahasena of Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka (r. 277-304 AD) had 1000 wives while prince Sihasena had 500. Even in the early modern times the kings of Dahomey (1600-1894 AD) used to have thousands of wives, the nobles hundreds and others tens while the soldier was unable to support one. In spite of just 38 years to live on earth, Joseph Smith (1805-1844 AD), the founder of Mormonism married 34 women while Brigham Young married a total of 65 women. The Bible contains about 42 instances of polygamy but we find no disapproval or limitation against polygamy or the number of wives one could marry. Although, there had been many celebrities in the world including the Christian monarchs and saints even before and after the period of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to adopt polygamy but the Jewish as well as Christian missionaries and scholars have blinded themselves on the universal practice of polygamy only to single out the Muslims and especially the holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ for adopting or sanctioning polygamy in the world. Consequently, their false propaganda during the colonial period had spread great disinformation against Islam and its Prophet ﷺ among the readers in the West. On proper scrutiny, one finds that the facts are extremely different from the propagation made by them. In the present chapter, therefore, we shall be producing the true facts to expose the untruth proliferated by the biased scholars of Christendom.

The earlier scriptures contain no revelation from the Lord suggesting the number of wives one could have at a time. Similarly, no religion prescribed any limit for the number of concubines. Usually it was the first or the principal wife who could bear the inheritors to her husband. Other wives or concubines neither enjoyed equality of rights with the first

wives nor their issues were entitled to receive inheritance from their fathers. Islam was, therefore, the first and the last revealed religion to enjoin that:

If ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly with the orphans, Marry women of your choice, Two or three or four; but if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one, or (a captive) that your right hands possess, that will be more suitable, to prevent you from doing injustice.⁶⁶³

The Islamic history, therefore, contains numerous examples of the sons of secondary wives or concubines married by the kings who in spite of the existence of the offspring of the first wife, succeeded to the throne after the death of their fathers. As such, Islam eliminated the distinction on the basis of one's birth. The most honoured in the sight of Allah were those who were the most righteous of them.

Although, the Muslims always enjoyed the freedom to marry up to four women as per their dire needs for the same, the Hindus in India too had no restriction on marrying more than one woman up to 1955. **Islam, as such, can neither be blamed as an inventor or promoter of polygamy nor the world statistics prove the Muslims more polygamous than other nations.** The census conducted in India during 1961 and 2006 show the percentage of polygamous people in that country. It reveals as under:

	1961	2006
Hindus	5.8%	1.77
Muslims	5.7%	2.56
Jains	6.7%	----
Christians	----	2.35
Buddhists	7.9%	3.25

We, therefore, observe that in 1961 percentage of polygamous people in other religions was more as compared to those in Islam. The Hindu Marriage Act of 1955, however, brought a change in the polygamy practiced by various religions in India. Although the said act had imposed no limit on the number of marriages of the Muslims, even then there came a sharp reduction in the percentage of polygamous people i.e. from 5.7% in 1961 to

⁶⁶³ Al-Qur'an 4:3 Yusuf Ali.

2.56% in 2006. The Law, however, had greater impact on the Hindus reducing the percentage of polygamy from 5.8 in 1961 to 1.77 in 2006. Similarly, the imposition of the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 reduced polygamy roughly to half of its position during 1961 to 2006 in almost all religions of India. The Millie Gazette of India January 2000 reports that the practice of Bigamy was prevalent more among Hindus than among the Muslims.

The fact is that only the Qur'an had restricted the unlimited number of wives to four. Similarly, the Qur'an is the only book of the revealed religions which restricts marriage with only one woman in case one fears he will not be able to maintain equitable position between his different wives (Al-Qur'an 4:3 and 4:29).

According to Islam, no believer could marry more than four women at a time. This was a great reformation in the marital traditions of the world. Even the relaxation up to four women was surrounded by severe conditions for the Muslims including those mentioned above. In the present context, we need to highlight that Islam conferred equality of rights on women so that they may be accepted as full human beings and independent persons who could inherit property and hold merchandise in their own names. Women were sensible partners enjoying equal respect and responsibilities with the males. The women could not be mal-treated by the males whether they were their fathers, brothers, husbands or sons. The Lord in fact had created equality between all the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve in the following:

1. O mankind! reverence your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, His mate, and from them twain scattered (Like seeds) countless men and women;- reverence Allah, through whom ye demand your mutual (rights), and (reverence) the wombs (That bore you): for Allah ever watches over you.⁶⁶⁴

The opening verse of Surah Al-Nisa as quoted above has extremely valuable lesson for humankind that men as well as women have been created from a single person. Hence, none of them can claim a natural ascendance over the

⁶⁶⁴ Al-Qur'an 4:1 Yusuf Ali.

other. Besides many other things, the verse also makes it mandatory for the believers to treat their kith and kin in a nice manner.

The second verse of the Surah reveals that:

2. To orphans restore their property (When They reach their age), nor substitute (your) worthless things for (their) good ones; and devour not their substance (by mixing it up) with your own for This is indeed a great sin.

Based on the legislation concerning orphans, the Surah was most likely revealed after many Muslims were killed at the Battle of Uhud, leaving numerous widows and orphans in the newly formed Muslim society. **The revelations in the Surah, therefore, began around the year 3 AH, but were not completed until the year 8 AH.** Consequently, parts of this Surah, the second longest in the Qur'an, were revealed concurrently with portions of "*The Examined Woman*," Surah 60. However, the Surah shows some thematic coherence, despite its disjointed and ongoing revelation.

The verse 2 of Surah al-Nisaa quoted above prohibited the Muslims to devour the property of the orphans or to exploit widows or girls left as orphans by the martyrs in the Battle. Although revealed at a particular occasion, yet its injunctions contain an everlasting law for the Muslims.

The most important among the conditions was to treat women equally in all matters of life. Those who found themselves incapable of maintaining justice between their wives were forbidden to marry any other woman besides their first wife. **In this respect, Islam is the only religion to prevent second marriage to those who fear that they will not be able to do justice with their wives.** The Lord, therefore, commands that:

3. if ye fear that ye shall not be able to Deal justly with the orphans, marry women of your choice, two or three or four; **but if ye fear that ye shall not be able to Deal justly (with them), then only one,** or (A captive) that your right hands possess, that will be more suitable, to prevent you from doing injustice.

It is, therefore, evident from the above that one could marry up to four wives only if he was confident that he would be able to maintain justice of treatment between them. In case of any apprehension of injustice between the

wives, one must not marry more than one wife. Alternatively one could marry a handmaid i.e. a captive of war (ما ملكت ايمانكم) who could not rightfully claim equality of rights or treatment with other wife or wives of her husband. Even in this case, the overall number wives must not exceed the limit of four wives at a time. This is the opinion of most of the jurists today.

As a further direction to the believers, the Lord said:

4. and give the women (on marriage) their dower As a free gift; but if they, of their own good pleasure, remit any part of it to you, take it and enjoy it with right good cheer.

The critics of Islam usually ignore that believers in Islam are obliged to follow the commandments of the Lord as preached by his prophets from Adam to Jesus Christ. In this respect, they cannot divert from the Divine injunctions to follow the teachings of visionaries, saints, sages, reformers, philosophers or ecumenical councils etc. The Almighty had himself started the institution of marriage from Adam and Eve i.e. the marriage between a man and a woman to procreate children and subdue everything on earth. The All-knowing God had the foreknowledge that in cases of urgency or other circumstantial pressures, the men may need to marry more than one woman. He, therefore, put no limit on the number of wives one could marry at a time up to the missionary period of Jesus Christ. Muhammad ﷺ was the promised Prophet of the Lord who was duty bound to complete and implement the Law of the Lord to last forever. It was revealed to him that no one may marry more than four women at a time. As such, **it was for the first time in the history of the religions that limit of four was imposed on the unlimited number of wives.** The law neither made it mandatory for everyone to marry four women nor it allowed those to marry more than one women who feel that they will not be able to maintain equitable treatment among the wives.

Monogamy had been the overwhelming mode of marriage in the society but keeping in view the dire needs of certain people such as those with barren, sick cold or unattractive wives, the Lord had granted a relaxation to them so that they may not feel compelled to violate the commandments of the Lord. Instead of divorcing a barren wife, therefore,

the husband could marry another wife or wives in accordance with his circumstances. No believer, however, was allowed to cross the limits imposed by the Lord. Capital punishments had been suggested and practised in the Muslim society to prevent any unlawful sex in the community. It was, therefore, to meet the needs of people in all possible circumstances that Islam allowed continuity of polygamy so that no pious or god-fearing person may suffer from severe repression to fulfill his sexual urge or genuine desire for children in case he was dissatisfied or childless. Even the people possessed with unusual sexual vigour having sources to maintain up to four wives could gratify their passions through lawful means. Islam, therefore, stresses on marriage of all men and women as per law of the Lord. All countries having surplus of women as compared to men may adopt polygamy so that all women may have their own husbands, houses, children and honorable social status in the society. Polygamy, therefore, provided the highway towards piety so that no one may transgress the limits provided by the Lord. To prevent the immoralities and births out of wedlock, therefore, the Islamic Law does not allow the believers to indulge into free sex or fornication. The permission to marry up to four wives, therefore, has served well not only to preserve the purity of the pedigree but also purity of the soul of the believers.

Instead of appreciating the sagacity of the Lord and overall benefits accruing both to men and women, Mr. John J. Pool criticized the permission for multiple marriages in the following words:

The Mohammedan law is, unfortunately, generous as to the number of wives a true believer may possess. This is another wrong under which Mohammedan women suffer.⁶⁶⁵ The words

⁶⁶⁵ Here John J. Pool presumes himself wiser than the Almighty. As a follower of revealed religion, he should have quoted the verses of the Old Testament or the preachings of Jesus Christ to prove that marriage with more than one woman was something wrong or forbidden by the Lord. He perhaps thinks that free sex with hundreds of women and production of bastards in the society causes no wrong to the wives of such violators of the law of the Lord. Had he been living today, he would be astonished to know that about 50% of the men and women in the western countries cheat each other simply due to ban on polygamy and admissibility of free sex

of the Koran are: "Take in marriage of such women as please you, two, or three, or four, and not more. But if ye fear that ye cannot act equitably towards so many, marry one only, or the slaves which ye shall have acquired. This will be easier, that ye swerve not from righteousness." I believe that many Mohammedans, constrained by poverty or right feeling, content themselves with one wife, but there are millions of men⁶⁶⁶ who take the Prophet at his word, and have two, or three, or four wives. And hence springs a fearful amount of discord and misery.⁶⁶⁷

Yet polygamy has a firm hold on the Mohammedan world, and will have as long as the verbal inspiration of the Koran is maintained as an article of Mohammedan faith. The argument is that whatever the Koran permits cannot be wrong, or even unwise. Experience goes for nothing, for is it not written "Take in marriage of such women as please you, two, or three, or four."⁶⁶⁸

By isolating certain words of the Qur'an from its text, Mr. Pool has dishonestly painted a perverted picture of the revelation from the Lord. Believers are, therefore, advised to start from the first verse of Surah Al-Nisa to understand the true import of the injunctions of the Lord. Having no fear of his accountability before the Lord, Mr. Pool continues to criticize the Islamic teachings in the following:

Men shall have pre-eminence above women, because of those advantages wherein God hath caused the one to excel the other, and for that which they expend of their substance in maintaining their wives. The honest women are obedient and careful in the absence of their husbands. But those whose perverseness ye shall be apprehensive of, rebuke, and remove them into separate apartments and chastise them."⁶⁶⁹

which is striking at the very root of moral uprightness and purity of the bloodlines of different families in the West.

⁶⁶⁶ John J. Pool has committed gross error in believing that there are millions of polygamous men among the Muslims. Such a situation could be possible only in the countries like Russia where there are millions of surplus women who find no husband at all. Actually, the number of polygamous people among Muslims had been lesser than other nations as is evident from figures given in the beginning of this chapter.

⁶⁶⁷ John J. Pool, *Studies in Muhammedanism* (Westminster: Archibald Constable & Company, 1892), p. 32.

⁶⁶⁸ John J. Pool, *Studies in Muhammedanism*, p. 33.

⁶⁶⁹ John J. Pool, *Studies in Muhammedanism*, p. 33.

It is apparent from the criticism of John J. Pool that in his eagerness to show some fault in the Qur'an, he intentionally ignored the context of the Surah to misinform his readers. He also arrogantly ignored contents of the Old Testament which contains at least 40 instances of polygamy including the instances such as of Abraham, Jacob, Moses and David. He overrules the traditions of the prophets mentioned above knowing full well that the OT, the Prophets and Jesus himself did not put any restriction on the number of wives. Before discarding polygamy, therefore, Mr. John J. Pool should have quoted the Divine Authority prohibiting it. If the Christian scholars like him fail to produce divine Authority to adopt virginity, celibacy or monogamy, they have committed an unauthorized diversion from the religion revealed by the Lord. In case they fail to quote any authority from the Lord or at least from Jesus Christ, they must revert to the law in the Old Testament as also rehearsed in the Qur'an.

Polygamy

In spite of the fact that Bible contains about 42 instances of Polygamy while many of the prophets of the Lord had been marrying more than one woman yet certain Christian fathers due to their own obsessions about holiness, celibacy and virginity started denouncing sex and also termed polygamy as a monstrous institution. Unluckily such preachers consider themselves wiser than the Almighty. Besides violating the commandments of the Lord, such people advise their followers to fight against the nature of the creation of man. No wonder that their followers utterly fail to follow the law introduced by self-acclaimed apostles or prophets. It was, therefore, natural that there must be wide-spread violations of the law conflicting with the human nature. We have, therefore, quoted numerous examples of such violations in various chapters of the book s.v. '*Plight of Women in the World*', '*Condemnations and Deprivation of Women*', '*Women, Christianity and the West*', '*Monasticism*', and '*Celibacy*' etc. It is obvious from such study that polygamy had been introduced by the Lord to forestall most of the violations in respect of sex by the human beings. Since the Christians had diverted from the law of the Almighty only to follow the Greco-Roman law,

therefore, it was inevitable for them to adopt all the vices attached to the same since the ancient periods.

The Old Testament or Jesus Christ did not prohibit marriage or polygamy at all. Only a few ascetics like St. Paul and his earliest disciples attached preference to virginity or abstinence than living a natural life as ordained by the Almighty. We find no commandment of the Lord to promote asceticism, celibacy and abstinence. These institutions conflict with the primary blessings of the Lord on humankind and the first commandment of the Lord to them to 'be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it (...)' (see Gen 1:27-29 KJV). Had worship of the Lord been the only purpose of the creation of man, the Lord could have easily created them like the angels without sex, appetites, sentiments and the needs like shelter and security for self and the family. The Lord created human beings with entirely different natures and needs **to test and try them under the given circumstances** in which human beings were obliged to discharge their liabilities as human beings and not the angels. They were duty bound to fulfill the purpose of their creation as commanded by the Almighty. The self suggested vain trials to live like the angels in the heaven destroys the purpose of the Almighty to create man with attributes differing from the angels. The God, therefore, never commanded the human beings to fight against the nature of their creation. Man was allowed to fulfill all his natural needs by channelizing his efforts in such manner that he does not violate the commandments of the Lord.

Instead of acknowledging that Islam was the only religion to introduce a clear cut restriction on the unlimited number of women a man could marry at a time, the Christians continue to blame Islam for sanctioning polygamy. Some of their missionaries blame that Islam is responsible for inventing polygamy. Others say that polygamy helped speedy conversion of people to Islam. Many of them propagate that foundation of Islam lay in polygamy. The study of history, however, proves all such allegations as absolutely incorrect. The truth is that polygamy without any limitations on the numbers of wives always used to be taken for granted in the world. Islam intervened only to curtail the unlimited number of wives permissible to a man

to a maximum of four at a time. This was subject to doing justice with each of the wives failing which one was forbidden to marry another wife. The fact is that the relaxation meant only to meet pressing needs of some of the people in the society. In India, for example, only an extremely limited percentage of men could afford to have second or third wife. This was so because the polygamy had been the privilege of the prosperous minority. Secondly married men remaining childless for a long time needed to marry another woman in the hope of getting children. Some people felt compelled to marry the widows of their brothers or closely related persons. Others had to marry divorced women to provide shelter to them and their children. We, therefore, do not find numerous instances of bigamous or polygamous people as imagined by the Western writers. **In India e.g. there had not been more than 9 persons in a thousand to marry another wife. In the Punjab province of Pakistan with total population exceeding 110 million, one cannot find on average more than 2 cases of four wives among a population of 100,000 people.** Such people too have good reasons to marry up to four women.

The 1971 census records 45.3 crore Hindus and six crore Muslims. Allowing for women and children to make up 65% of each group, as many as one crore Hindu men had more than one wife in 1971, compared to 12 lakh Muslim men.⁶⁷⁰

In many cases, 2nd or 3rd marriage became a necessity only to avoid Talaq or desertion of the old, sick, ugly infertile or paralyzed women. Hence, Muslim husbands usually choose to become polygamous to avoid any disturbance in the social status, maintenance and look after of the women already married by them. Anyhow, the women who find it impossible to reconcile with the 2nd marriage of their husbands had the option to seek Talaq or 'Khula' from the court of Law. Mr. Pool is also wrong to presume that Muslims are more polygamous than other nations in the world or polygamy in them was causing a drain of women making it necessary to bridge the gap by importation of slave women from East Africa. Where are such figures to prove his contention? Who were the people enjoying liberty to import such women from the Christian countries ruled by the British, French, Portuguese or Belgian governments etc.

⁶⁷⁰ Divya A. *Times of India*, Sep 13, 2009.

It was, therefore, incumbent upon the western Christian rulers to stop such a mal-practice in the territories under their control. Mr. Pool has no excuse for them. Being a Christian missionary, however, he felt himself duty bound to present a horrible picture of polygamy in the Muslim community without any statistics to prove his stance. Ignoring all that, he continues to rebuke the Muslims in the following:

There are more women than men slaves in Mohammedan countries,⁶⁷¹ and the sanction which the Koran gives to the Faithful to take their women slaves as concubines is one of the chief reasons why slavery has such a hold on Moslems. In the 4th Surah of the Koran it is written: "Take in marriage of such women as please you, two, three, or four, and not more. But if ye fear that ye cannot act equitably towards so many, marry one only, or the slaves which ye shall have acquired." This permission to add to the one wife any number of slave-girls, opened not only the floodgates of vice to Mohammedans, but forged a chain of iron about the necks of slaves that has made slavery an enduring national institution in Moslem lands.⁶⁷²

Before proceeding further we need to reiterate that no other book of the revealed religions had ever put a limit on the number of wives. **Credit goes to the Qur'an which for the first time in the history of man forbade the believers not to marry more than four women at a time.** This permission to marry up to four women under certain special circumstances was subject to various

⁶⁷¹ To know the facts, the readers can go through our book titled '*Slavery and Human Rights through the Ages*' Vol II. They will observe that the reasons of more women slaves in the African countries was the transportation of men to the American continents from early 16th century to about 1850. Had there been more slave women as compared to the men in the Muslim countries the same had been caused by the western traders of slaves in Africa for about 350 years.

⁶⁷² John J. Pool, *Studies in Muhammedanism*, p. 386. Let the readers go through our book '*Slavery and Human Rights through the Ages*' to know that **John J. Pool was trying in vain to conceal hundreds of millions of slaves captured from Africa by the western Christendom during 16th century to the end of 19th century.** The readers may go through our book to discover that the slaves were treated worse than the hogs by the colonizers in the American, African and Australian continents besides many other islands in the World.

conditions as described earlier. We have also stated that even the concubines married by Muslims fall under the same limit of four women according to majority of the Muslim jurists.

We do not know from where John J. Pool gleaned the concept that Muslims enjoyed permission to add to one wife any number of slave girls. He ignores the fact that in Islam there were only two sources for the concubines. One: those who had been inherited as slaves from the forefathers of the believers. The said source stands stands exhausted since the earliest generations of Muslims. The Holy Prophet ﷺ had exhorted them repeatedly to manumit the slaves due to which most of them had been set free during the life of the Prophet ﷺ. Besides this, Islam prohibited the Muslims to enslave any free man or to abduct people for the purpose of slavery. The second source was the women captives of war captured right from the battle field. Such women could be set free by the Muslim Amir or exchange against the Muslims captive of War with the enemy. A small number of such captives could also be ransomed by their families. The residue, therefore, would always be very small that could be distributed among the army personnel or some other persons as per discretion of the Emir. Normally, the number of the captives that could be retained for service or slavery would not touch the figure of a thousand in any battle fought by the Muslims. There as such was no possibility to have unlimited number of concubines, due to which there was no necessity of putting a limit on the number of concubines one could have. Women captives of war were taken as a temporary phase and they had to be distributed among some of the Muslims due to the reason that there were no jails in the community.

No Permission to Marry Multitude of Slave Women

Continuation of slavery or concubinage as a permanent institution had never been the object of the Muslims. It had to be eliminated as soon as possible. Concubines were, therefore, supposed to be a temporary phase in the Muslim society. They soon had to be absorbed as free and independent members of the community. It was also for this reason that no limit was suggested for the number of

concubines simply because Islam tolerated it as a temporary institution and avoided granting any permanent recognition to them. Although certain Muslim rulers or rich persons might have transgressed the limit of four wives by misinterpreting the verse 4:3 of Qur'an yet prominent Muslim scholars had been of the opinion that the permission for four wives was inclusive of the slave wives. One could not, therefore, exceed the limit of four wives by adding slave women to it. The Bible contained a standard example in Jacob son of Isaac who had two free wives and two slave women to make it four. We also know that the permission to marry up to four women had the restriction that:

but if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one, or (a captive) that your right hands possess (4:3).

As such, only those believers had the permission to marry slave or captive women who feared that they will not be able to deal justly with more than one free wives. Such people could, therefore, marry slave women up to the limit of four wives at a time in toto. The verse, therefore, has no permission for marrying unlimited number of concubines or to indulge into sex with slave women not married by them.

It is, therefore, evident from the verse that the slave women had been suggested only for those people who feared that they will not be able to deal justly with them. Such people feeling urgent need for another marriage can, therefore, marry slave women instead of free women. This will save them from the accountability before the Lord. The overall limit, however, must not exceed four. Mr. Pool has also quoted Muir saying:

Muir, in his "*Life of Mahomet*," says: "As regards female slaves under the thralldom of Mohammedan masters, it is difficult to conceive **more signal degradation of the human species**; they are treated as an inferior class of beings. Equally restricted as if they had entered the marriage state, they are expressly excluded from any title to conjugal rights. They are purely at the disposal of their proprietors."⁶⁷³

⁶⁷³ John J. Pool, *Studies in Muhammedanism*, p. 386.

Mr. Muir is extremely wrong in his comments. No doubt some of the Muslim kings or richest persons might have wrongly interpreted the verse about marrying the concubines to sexually abuse them which had neither been the general practice of the Muslims nor did they accept it as lawful for them. It is, therefore, strange for Muir to talk of signal degradation of human species in their capacity of slaves or wives of the believers. He could have uttered such words only if he had been extremely ignorant about the history of slavery in the American continents, Australia and in Europe. Had Mr. Muir and Mr. Pool been alive today we would have requested them to compare the so-called bad Muslim treatment of the pre-medieval times with the treatment of women slaves in the American, African and Australian continents along with their colonies in hundreds of islands and various parts of Asian continent from 1550 to 1950 AD. For details, please go through our book '*Slavery and Human Rights through the Ages*', Vol. I, Chapters 9 and 10.

As regards the lavishness and violations of the limitations set by the Lord, the Christian kings had perhaps gone far beyond the Muslims e.g. it is reported that the Versailles palace of King Louis XIV of France was just like a small city with household staff of the king consisting of 15000 persons. At least half of these servants consisted of women employed for different jobs. Although there is no mention of concubines among them yet the women entirely at the disposal of the king could be misused in any manner the king was pleased. We have discussed in detail the Versailles Palace in our book '*Slavery and Human Rights through the Ages*', Vol. I, Chapter 11, titled '*Target Islam I*', s.v. '*Versailles Palace*'.

Mr. John J. Pool was absolutely incorrect to allege that Muhammad as a prophet had sanctioned slavery because according to the Old Testament, it existed prior to the times of Prophet Noah. Slavery, therefore, was prevalent throughout the world since time immemorial. The Old Testament, Jesus Christ and his followers did not place any restriction on it.

In spite of his animosity against the Muslims and bitter criticism of Islam, Mr. John J. Pool had to confess certain

excellent qualities of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the following. He says:

He strongly urged the Faithful to treat their slaves with consideration and kindness, and make their lot as easy and comfortable as possible.

In some cases the Prophet even advised his followers to marry their slaves. In the 4th Surah of the Koran we read: "Whoso among you hath not means sufficient that he may marry free women who are believers, let him marry with such of your maidservants, whom your right hands possess, as are true believers: for God well knoweth your faith. Ye are the one from the other: therefore marry them, with the consent of their masters, and give them their dower according to justice. And when they are married, if they be guilty of adultery, they shall suffer half the punishment which is appointed for the free women. This is allowed unto him among you who feareth to sin by marrying free women⁶⁷⁴; but if ye abstain from marrying slaves, it will be better for you: God is gracious and merciful."⁶⁷⁵

Defense of Polygamy

Even while pretending to defend Islam Stanley Lane Poole could not suppress his ill-will against Islam. Referring to Sayyida Hafsa bint Umar, he uses obnoxious words for her. He writes:

It is a melancholy spectacle to see professedly Christian biographers gloating over the stories and fables of Mohammad's domestic relations like the writers and readers of 'society' journals. It is, of course, a fact that whilst the Prophet allowed his followers only four wives he took more than a dozen himself; but be it remembered that, with his unlimited power, he need not have restricted himself to a number insignificant compared with the harems of some of his successors⁶⁷⁶, that he never divorced one of his wives, that all

⁶⁷⁴ Muslims were obliged to maintain equality and justice between the free women married by them. In case they apprehended any lapse in justice with them, they could avoid the sin by marrying a slave woman who did not enjoy the right of equality with free wives of her master.

⁶⁷⁵ John J. Pool, *Studies in Muhammedanism*, p. 387.

⁶⁷⁶ It is strange that Mr. Poole ignores more than forty personalities as predecessors of Muhammad like King David, Solomon, Rehoboam son of Solomon and Abijah son of Rehoboam mentioned in the Old Testament. All these people had much larger number of wives and

of them save one were widows, and that one of these widows was endowed with so terrific a temper that Aboo-Bekr and 'Othman had already politely declined the honour of her alliance before the Prophet married her: the gratification of living with a vixen cannot surely be excessive.⁶⁷⁷ Several of these marriages must have been entered into from the feeling that those women whose husbands had fallen in battle for the faith, and who had thus been left unprotected, had a claim upon the generosity of him who prompted the fight. Other marriages were contracted from motives of policy, in order to conciliate the heads of rival factions. It was not a high motive, but one does not look for very romantic ideas about love-matches from a man who regarded women as 'crooked ribs,' and whose system certainly does its best to make marriage from love impossible yet, on the other hand, it was not a sensual motive. Perhaps the strongest reason — one of which it is impossible to over-estimate the force — that impelled Mohammad to take wife after wife was his desire for male offspring. It was a natural wish that he should have a son who should follow in his steps and carry on his work; but the wish was never gratified, Mohammad's sons died young. After all, the overwhelming argument is his fidelity to his first wife. When he was little more than a boy he married Khadijah, who was fifteen years older than himself, with all the added age that women gain so quickly in the East. For five-and-twenty years Mohammad remained faithful to his elderly wife, and when she was sixty-five, and they might have celebrated their 'silver wedding,' he was as devoted to her as when first he married her. During all those years there was never a breath of scandal. Thus far Mohammad's life will bear microscopic scrutiny. Then Khadijah died; and though he married many women afterwards, some of them rich in youth

concubines than the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It was only to malign the Muslims that he refers to certain anonymous successors of the Holy Prophet ﷺ or perhaps certain kings who might have transgressed the limits allowed by the Lord. We cannot, therefore, accuse the prophet for the acts of the violators of law if any.

⁶⁷⁷ Stanley Lane Poole had been extremely ignorant of the true facts behind the hesitation of Abu Bakr and Othman to marry Hafsa bint Umar. The fact was that both of them knew that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had intended to marry her. **We, however, strongly disapprove the silly remarks of Stanley Lane Poole to use words such as "vixen" for a lady who had been extremely pious and worshiping the Lord day and night so much so that the Almighty himself praised her.** The prophet ﷺ said: 'Jibrael came to me and said to me: Return Hafsa for she is devoted to fasting and standing in prayer at night and she will be your wife in paradise (Reported by Al Hakim, Al Tabrani and Ibn Saad on the Authority of Anas).

and beauty, he never forgot his old wife, and loved her best to the end: 'when I was poor she enriched me, when they called me a liar she alone believed in me, when all the world was against me she alone remained true. This loving, tender memory of an old wife laid in the grave belongs only to a noble nature; it is not to be looked for in a voluptuary.⁶⁷⁸

Thank God that even Lane Poole had to end his long passage with some good remarks. Actually, it was due to his antagonism against Islam that he had lost not only his eyesight but also his integrity to appreciate anything good in Islam. Normally he had always been concluding his discussions by perverting the facts.

Stanley Lane Poole on Women

He writes that:

Mohammad was not the man to make a social reform affecting women⁶⁷⁹, nor was Arabia the country in which such a change should be made, nor Arab ladies perhaps the best subjects for the experiment. **Still he did something towards bettering the condition of women: he limited the number of wives to four**; laid his hand with the utmost severity on the incestuous marriages that were then rife in Arabia; compelled husbands to support their divorced wives during their four months of probation; made irrevocable divorce less common by adding the rough, but deterring, condition that a woman triply divorced could not return to her

⁶⁷⁸ Edward William Lane, *Selections from the Qur'an*, (London: Trubner & Co. Ludgate Hill, 1879), p. lxi-lxxii, (Introduction).

⁶⁷⁹ Had Mr. Stanley Lane Poole been living today, we would have asked him about any other prophet or reformer in the world who had introduced greater social reforms affecting women throughout the world. The same question we pose before the critics living today. Let them mention any other personality or an institution who has introduced reforms more beneficial to women than introduced by the Prophet of Islam ﷺ during 622-632 AD. In case they fail to do so let them honestly accept the excellence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as emancipator of women throughout the world. Readers can, however, find enough material in the present book to substantiate our claim that no other prophet or a reformer ever made the reforms that emancipated the women from degeneration, evilness, helplessness, destitution degradation in the society. For this purpose, they may even draw a comparison between the reforms introduced by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as against introduced by Moses, Jesus and his self claimed apostle i.e. St. Paul.

husband without first being married to someone else — a condition exceedingly disagreeable to the first husband; and required four witnesses to prove a charge of adultery against a wife — a merciful provision, difficult to be fulfilled. The evil permitted⁶⁸⁰ by Mohammad in leaving the number of wives four instead of insisting on monogamy was not great. Without considering the sacrifice of family peace which the possession of a large harem entails, the expense of keeping several wives, each of whom must have a separate suite of apartments or a separate house, is so great that not more than one in twenty can afford it. It is not so much in the matter of wives as in that of concubines that Mohammad made an irretrievable mistake⁶⁸¹. The condition of the female slave in the East is indeed deplorable.⁶⁸² She is at the entire mercy of her master, who can do what he pleases with her and her companions; for the Muslim is not restricted in the number of his concubines⁶⁸³, as he is in that of his wives. The

⁶⁸⁰ We do not know on what ground Stanley Lane Poole has termed marriage with more than one woman as an evil. If this was an evil, it had been committed by many of the earlier prophets including Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Solomon and others. We do not think that S. Lane Poole could be ignorant of the contents of the Old Testament. As such, it was not just for him to blame the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ for sanctioning multi-marriages because the Old Testament is full of such instances and the institution existed w.e.f Lamech the father of Noah (Gen 4:23).

⁶⁸¹ Even on this account the readers must go through the Old Testament to know the existence of concubines on a large scale. It is, therefore, wrong to blame the Holy Prophet ﷺ for sanctioning the existence of concubines.

⁶⁸² We fail to understand what blinded Mr. Stanley Lane Poole to overlook the fact that David had at least 8 wives and indefinite number of concubines about whom it has been reported that *"And David came to his house at Jerusalem; and the king took the ten women his concubines, whom he had left to keep the house (2Sa 20:3) and his son Solomon 700 wives in addition to having 300 concubines (1Ki. 11:1-4) and Rehoboam took 18 wives and 3 scores concubines (2Ch 11:21 KJV).* As regards the cruelest treatment with slave women, Stanley Lane Poole could not have been neglectful of the fact about hundreds of millions of African slave women tortured, beaten and sexually assaulted by colonizers in the American continents. Hundreds of books on the subject are available about the same in the market. For short reference, however, readers can go through chapters titled *"Horrors of Slavery"* and *"Dehumanization of Slaves"* in Vol. II of our book *"Slavery and Human Rights through the Ages"*.

⁶⁸³ Stanley Lane Poole must have been aware of the fact that no promiscuity had ever been allowed in Islam. Any master developing sexual relations with a woman slave had to accept her as his secondary wife. He had to take all responsibilities of the

female white slave is kept solely for the master's sensual gratification, and is sold when he is tired of her, and so she passes from master to master, a very wreck of womanhood. Her condition is a little improved if she bears a son to her tyrant; but even then he is at liberty to refuse to acknowledge the child as his own, though it must be owned he seldom does this. Kind as the Prophet was himself towards bondswomen; one cannot forget the unutterable brutalities which he suffered his followers to inflict upon conquered nations in the taking of slaves. The Muslim soldier was allowed to do as he pleased with any 'infidel' woman⁶⁸⁴ he might meet with on his victorious march. When one thinks of the thousands of women, mothers and daughters, who must have suffered untold shame and dishonour by this license, he cannot find words to express his horror. And this cruel indulgence has left its mark on the Muslim character, nay, on the whole character of Eastern life. Now, as at the first, young Christian girls are dragged away from their homes and given over to the unhallowed lusts of a Turkish voluptuary; and not only to

consequences of his sex with the said slave woman. Children born out of the slave woman enjoyed parity of all rights including freedom and inheritance along with other offspring of the master. As regards no restriction on the number of concubines, it had always been a debatable question in Islamic jurisprudence. According to many jurists no one can exceed the overall limit of four wives including the concubines. Others disagree with the same. We agree with the former group and believe that Islam did not allow more than four wives including the concubines. Islam also discourages continuation of slavery. It actually aimed at mitigation or emancipation of slavery in a gradual manner. As such, existence of concubines was taken as a temporary evil likely to be eliminated from the society over a period of time. The primary permissible source of concubinage had been the women captives of war who could not be released either through exchange with the Muslim captives of war nor could be ransomed by the enemy. The said source had come to an end within the first three centuries of Islam. Even so some kings and extremely rich persons continued the practice by purchasing slave women from the market. Majority of Muslims hates such a practice as being unlawful. We, however, like to add that concubinage especially among the Christian Kings and clergy could never be eliminated by the western fathers of Christianity and it is being practiced till today.

⁶⁸⁴ Instead of quoting facts with proof from history, Stanley Lane Poole has thrown his venom on the Muslims which is absolutely incorrect. For better understanding of Islamic codes of war, the readers may go through the chapter titled '*War Codes and War Ethics of Islam*' in our book "*Slavery and Human Rights Through the Ages*" Vol. I and also chapter on Concubinage in the present book.

Turks, but to Englishmen; for the contagion has spread, and Englishmen, even those who by their sacred order should know better, instead of uttering their protest, as men of honour and Christians, against the degradation, have followed the example of the Turk, and helped in the ruin of women. Concubinage is the black stain in Islam. With Mohammad's views of women, we could hardly expect him to do better; but, on the other hand, he could scarcely have done worse.⁶⁸⁵

The extreme bias of Mr. Stanley Lane Poole against Islam had deprived him of his integrity as a historian or a scholar. To know the truth, however, the readers may refer to the authentic sources of history recorded by trust worthy historians of Islam.

Polygamy a Blessing of the Lord for Women

Although polygamy prevailed in the world from the time of Noah yet **it had always been the privilege or necessity of only about 1-2 percent of the people in the society.** Multi-marriage is not, however, a matter of enjoyment for all people who have more than one wife. Most of the polygamous people marry women under pressing circumstances. In the previous chapter, therefore, we had given general remarks to justify polygamy. In the present chapter, we shall go into some detail to elaborate the reasons that compel some individuals to marry women in addition to their first wife. On an analysis of the reasons for polygamy, we find that in most of the cases there had been certain special circumstances compelling the men for marrying different women. It includes marriage of additional women only to protect or accommodate the helpless widows or divorcees with or without their children.

A large number of unmarried, divorced or widowed women in the western countries like Russia, UK and USA etc. continue to be a great menace in the society. Whether other nations like it or not, **Islam acknowledges the basic right of each woman to have her own husband, home, children and social status in the society.** Marriage is the only natural institution to guarantee their

⁶⁸⁵ Edward William Lane, *Selections from the Qur'an*, p. xci-xcii, (Introduction). By attributing different calumnies to Islam and its prophet ﷺ Mr. Lane Poole was perhaps trying to cover the widespread incest, adultery, fornication and prostitution in the Western Christendom.

basic rights along with status and provisions for them. Keeping in view this aspect of the polygamy, it is a blessing of the Lord for women than a monstrous practice as propagated by the Christian West. God had been the supreme lawgiver in all the revealed religions. Violating the same, the Christian nations in the West follow the teachings of their saints as lawgivers instead of the Almighty. Due to prevalence of the system of majority is authority in them, minorities have no rights at all. Unmarried women, widows, celibates and divorcees being in minority fail to assert their rights including the right of marriage and protection from the majority in those states.

Broadly speaking there are two types of people in the world. The first category consists of People of the Book who believe in the one and the only Lord God of the Universe who is All-wise, All-knowing, omnipotent, omnipresent creator and sustainer of the heaven and the earth and everything in between the same. Such people depend more on the revelations of the Lord and instead of relying on Greek reasoning and logic, they try to ascertain the authenticity of the revelations. Once they are convinced that a certain commandment is actually from the Lord, they surrender their will before the will of the Almighty to show absolute obedience to His commandments. The other category which may be in majority in the world at present consists either of the atheists or secularists having several forms in the world. These people, therefore, depend entirely on her own wisdom, reasoning and material or worldly benefits. Since our present discussion pertains to the treatment of women in different religions, therefore, our reasoning concentrates broadly on the religious teachings and practice than logic and reasoning of the seculars or the atheists.

Most of the people believe that except for certain minor differences in various climates, the number of the births of males as well as females remains equal in the world. In spite of this, the number of women in the marriageable age has always exceeded the number of males in the same category. **Some scholars, therefore, recommend polygamy to accommodate the surplus women in the marriageable age.** They also support their view with the reasoning that males in the marriageable age had been

more vulnerable to death than women. Hard labor, risky jobs, wars and lesser immunity to diseases are counted among the primary causes of the mortality of the male youths. Ignoring all this, we as Muslims believe that there must have been supreme wisdom of the Lord to allow polygyny and to prohibit polyandry in the world. Our stress, therefore, is on the religious law. We need to affirm whether the scriptures prohibit the polygamy or they have raised no objection to it. In the later case polygamy will be a lawful institute. While unlimited number of marriages without any restrictions had been allowed by all the revealed religions in the world, Islam has restricted it to 4 wives at a time. Even this relaxation has been subject to justice in dealing with different wives and the sources to provide their basic needs.

It is worth noting here that in spite of a general permission to marry unlimited number of women in various religions only a negligible minority had been polygamous in the world. Overwhelming majority of the people have always been monogamous. Only the few who felt urgency for different reasons resorted to marry more than one woman. Different people had different reasons for the same. The opinions of certain western writers that polygamy depicts male-domination and it oppresses the women being the weaker sex, therefore, can be taken as a half truth. On detailed analysis of the institution, one finds that in most of the cases, polygamy has been adopted for benefits of the women as we shall discuss in detail in the following:

Polygamy to Ensure the Primary Rights of Women

The modern world believes in maintenance of identical rights of men as well as women. Both genders, therefore, enjoy equal rights to marry. As regards marriage, the institution is more beneficial for the females than the males. Being a weaker sex, women need a home and husband of their own so that they could enjoy peace, shelter, protection and tranquility of the home life. Some people, therefore, **observe that the crisis when a woman is left unmarried is more than any other crisis for her and the society.** We, therefore, agree with Murtada Mutahhiri who writes that:

The right of marriage is the most natural human right. No person should be deprived of this right on any pretext or on any grounds. The right of marriage is a right which every individual can claim from his or her society. A society cannot do anything to deprive a group of this right.

Just in the same way as the right to work, the right to food, the right to a dwelling, the right to education and instruction, and the right to liberty are counted as the part of basic and fundamental rights of a human being and an individual cannot for any reason and on any ground be deprived of those rights, so **the right to marry is also a natural right**. If the number of women fit to be married exceeds the number of marriageable men, the law restricting marriage to monogamy will be inconsistent with this natural right. So this law would be antagonistic to fundamental and natural human rights.⁶⁸⁶

In spite of its permissibility, however, polygamy may remain confined only to a negligible minority of the people in the community. We shall, therefore, be throwing light on different circumstances and aspects of human life necessitating polygamy. Total elimination of the institution will, therefore, be detrimental to tranquility of human life. Besides this, the prohibition of polygamy may deprive a substantial number of women of protection and sustenance through marriage. They shall be doomed to lifelong hatred and loneliness. An important reason for such despair may be surplus of women in the marriageable age. Monogamy, therefore, proves to be a cruel system preventing widows and divorced women from restoration of their social status in the community. Surplus of unmarried women makes them public property which may erode human values and sexual morality in the community as is evident from the prevailing conditions in most advanced nations of the world in the West.

It is also pointed out that excess of females over males due to natural factors, wars or certain diseases in different times during the history of the nations made it necessary for certain men to marry more than one woman. We shall, therefore, be discussing the history, the social necessity and numerous other causes to justify continuation of polygamy as a necessity than lavishness of those who become polygamous just for gratification of their lusts.

⁶⁸⁶ Murtada Mutrahhari, *The Rights of Women in Islam*, p. 349-350.

Such marriages though despised by many have the benefit of securing girls and wives of other people from any wrongful attempts of such people. The genuine need of polygamy can be assessed from the following:

"Soviet Census of 1959 revealed a really tragic situation. In January 1959, the total population was 208,800,000 composed of 94,000,000 men and 114,800,000 women. Thus **there were then 20,800,000 more women than men, or 122.1 women for every 100 men** The ratio between adult (eighteen and over) men and women immediately after the war reached the staggering figure of no less than a **100 to 150**"⁶⁸⁷

The post-war Germany perhaps was the worst sufferer due to extreme shortage of men in the marriageable age. There were millions and millions of widows or unmarried women who could find no husband at all. **The ratio of women in the marriageable age had risen to about 7 for each male in that age.** Only the richest, beautiful or attractive women could find a husband. The happiest moment of the marriage of a girl would usually create a tragic atmosphere in the vicinity due to mourning or sobbing of many young girls failing to get a life partner for them. **Polygamy could, therefore, be the most suitable solution to get out of the worst situation created by decimation of the young men in the marriageable age.**

The fact that females in cool climates and especially in the Eastern European countries like Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania and Russia far exceeds the number of males justifies the polygamy till all the surplus women desiring marriage are absorbed as married women in the country. According to 1851 census there were about one million more women in UK than men. It is said that these figures caused moral and social panic with increasing number of unmarried women living lives of misery and poverty. Some writers, therefore, observe that if polygamy as permitted in the bible had not been replaced by the man-made law in the Western Christendom, their would have been no problem of excessive women or fornication on such a large scale. Able bodied wealthier persons could have married the surplus women in the society. Statistical figures may also help us understand the position. The population statistics of UNO

⁶⁸⁷ *Woman's Plight*, p. 243, quoted from Patai, Raphael, *Women in the Modern World*, (New York: Free Press, 1967), p. 389.

for the year 1964 issued in 1965 show total population of soviet republic as 216101000. Out of it males were 97840000 while females were 118261000. As such, according to the monogamous law there will be **a surplus of 20421000 women who were destined to remain unmarried in spite of the fact that all these women had the basic right and craving to have their own husbands, social status, homes and children** etc. The figures given above show more than 17% of the women in Russia as unmarried and deprived of their natural rights of having husbands, home lives, social status and lawful children. The surplus women can be called a minority but even a minority cannot be denied their basic rights in a country having a clear cut majority of women. Such a situation is not acceptable for Islam. It would not allow 17% surplus women living constantly under depression and dismay. To restore their dignity and rights like other women in the state Islam suggests their marriage with the healthy people who can afford to maintain more than one wife. Only this could be the best remedy to save both men and women from the adversity and immoralities as are evident in the Western society today.

According to UN Census 2015 there were 85.49 males for every 100 females and 116.98 females for each 100 males. The position was much different in other countries. In UK for example **more than a quarter of the female** population between 20 and 45 was unmarried. The Western advocates of justice for women may, therefore, observe the said flagrant denial of basic human rights to more than 25% of the female population in UK.

As regards USA, it has been reported that in 2014, there were 124.6 million singles in America representing over 50% of all US residents. **Among the singles there were 62% who never married, 24% who stood divorced and 14% who were widowed.** The most astonishing point in the statistics from 1960 onwards is the rapid increase in the trend of living single. **As compared to 30% of the people living singly in 1960, their percentage had increased to 85% in 2014.**⁶⁸⁸ It

⁶⁸⁸ UPCI Single Adult Ministry, US single statistics & Date, www.upcisam.com.

transpires from the above that the majority of the US population preferred living singly than to live a married life whereas about **one in 8 people were already living together as couples without any lawful marriage.**⁶⁸⁹ **The afore-stated trend, therefore, signals the futility of marriage and elimination of family life in future.**

We, however, think that primarily the anarchy is being promoted by males avoiding their liabilities arising out of marriage. Males no doubt feel strong urge for gratification of their sex but are least interested to take any responsibility for the outcome of their sexual act. Many of them do not care even for the means or the objects of the satisfaction. The mere urge for physical contentment leads them to various crimes such as incest, fornication, rape, pedophilia, homosexuality, sexual harassment and even abuse of certain kinds of animals. Men have little interest about the welfare of their victim. By adopting the hit-and-run policy they try to live alone without any liabilities on them. Since only the women are likely to bear the consequences of sex outside the wedlock, therefore, they must ponder the true benefits of the vastly propagated equality of their rights with the males. As compared to men, women being a weaker sex are more interested in their protection, sustenance and love. Satisfaction of sex has lesser importance than other needs of women. It has, therefore, been observed that 'Males love females to get sex whereas females give sex to get love and protection'.

We, therefore, observe that by the nature of their creation females are bestowed with an inclination to marry, to have a house and a peaceful atmosphere to bring up the children. Instead of mere satisfaction of sex, they look for permanent attachment with a faithful companion to meet all their needs throughout the life. In view of this, we feel that males are more responsible to destroy the sanctification of marriage and the traditions of family life which are fast moving towards its elimination. The disintegration of family units may ultimately retard civilization in the world. The legitimacy granted to homosexuality is not only a great sin against the divine commandments but it also erodes all human values about moral excellence. The pest is spreading at a fast speed in

⁶⁸⁹ Jessica Elgot, *The Guardian*, July 2015.

the western world. Many countries have, therefore, succumbed to the increasing pressure of the LGBTs (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender), to legitimize the same-sex marriage e.g. the Netherlands (2000), Belgium (2003), Canada and Spain (2005), South Africa (2006), Norway (2008), Sweden (2009), Iceland, Portugal and Argentina (2010), Denmark (2012), Brazil, England / Wales, New Zealand, Uruguay and France (2013), Luxembourg and Scotland (2014), Greenland Finland, Ireland and United States (2015), Colombia (2016) Germany and Malta (2017). All these countries have, therefore, legitimized the acts which had never been allowed by the creator.

Many other European or American countries are on the way to grant legal protection to LGBTs. It is a great moral perversion to prohibit polygamy and to allow free sex adultery or same sex marriage in different countries of the world. Lawfully married people may, therefore, be reduced to exception in the West by the end of the present century. Will Durant, the famous historian of the 20th century had written that:

As for homosexuality, it became almost an obligatory part of the Greek revival (...) San Bernardino found so much of it in Naples that he threatened the city with the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah. Aretino described the aberration as quite popular in Rome, and he himself, between one mistress and another, asked the duke of Mantua to send him an attractive boy. In 1455 the Venetian Council of Ten took official note "how the abominable vice of sodomy multiplies in this city"; and "to avert the wrath of God," it appointed two men in each quarter of Venice to put down the practice. The Council noted that some men had taken to wearing feminine garb, and that some women were adopting male attire, and it called this "a species of sodomy." In 1492 a noble and a priest, convicted of homosexual acts, were beheaded in the Piazzetta, and their bodies were publicly burned. These, of course, were exceptional cases, from which we must not generalize; but we may assume that homosexuality was more than normally present in Renaissance Italy until the Counter Reformation. We may say likewise of prostitution. According to Infessura – who liked to load his statistics against papal Rome – **there were 6,800 registered prostitutes in Rome in 1490, not counting clandestine practitioners, in a population of some 90,000.** In Venice the census of 1509 reported 11,654

prostitutes in a population of some 300,000.⁶⁹⁰

In the fifteenth century a daughter unmarried at fifteen was a family disgrace; in the sixteenth century the age of disgrace deferred to seventeen, to allow time for higher education. Men, who enjoyed all the privileges and facilities of promiscuity, could be lured into marriage only by brides bringing substantial dowries. (...) In the Medieval theory of marriage it was expected that love would develop between man and wife through the varied partnerships of marriage in joy and sorrow, prosperity and adversity; and apparently the expectation was fulfilled in the majority of cases. (...) Nevertheless adultery was rampant. Since most marriages among the upper classes were diplomatic or political interests, many husbands felt warranted in having a mistress; and the wife, though she might mourn, usually closed her eyes – or her lips – to the offense. **Among the middle classes some men assumed that adultery was a legitimate diversion;** Machiavelli and his friends seem to have thought nothing of exchanging notes about their infidelities. When, in such cases, the wife avenged herself by imitation, the husband was as like as not to ignore it, and wear his horns with grace.⁶⁹¹

About adultery, he observes:

It is not clear that adultery was less popular in the middle ages than in the Renaissance. And as medieval adultery was tempered with chivalry, so in the Renaissance it was softened, in the lettered classes, by an idealization of the refinement and spiritual charms of the educated woman . . . girls of good family were kept in relative seclusion from men not of their own household. They were sedulously instructed in the advantages of premarital chastity; sometimes with such success that we hear of a young woman drowning herself after being raped. She was doubtless woman exceptional, for a bishop proposed to raise a statue to her.⁶⁹²

Extraordinary Number of Bastards

About renaissance Italy, it has been reported that:

Nevertheless there must have been considerable premarital adventure; otherwise it would be difficult to account for the extraordinary number of bastards to be found in any city of renaissance Italy. Not to have bastards was a distinction; to have them was no serious disgrace; the man, on marrying,

⁶⁹⁰ Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, Part V, 'The Renaissance', (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1953), p. 576.

⁶⁹¹ Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, Part V, p. 578-579.

⁶⁹² Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, Part V, p. 575.

usually persuaded his wife to let his illegitimate progeny join the household and be brought up with her own children. **To be a bastard was no great disability; the social stigma involved was almost negligible; legitimation could be obtained by lubricating an ecclesiastical hand.** In default of legitimate and competent heirs bastard sons could succeed to an estate, even to a throne, as Ferrante I succeeded Alfonso I at Naples, and as Leonello d'Este succeeded Niccolò III at Ferrara. **When Pius II came to Ferrara in 1459 he was received by seven princes, all illegitimate.** The rivalry of bastards with legitimate sons was a rich source of Renaissance violence.⁶⁹³

Robert, Bishop of Aquino, toward the close of the fifteenth century, described the morals of the young men in his diocese as unashamedly corrupt; they explained to him, he tells us, that fornication was no sin, that chastity was an old-fashioned tabu, and that virginity was on the wane. Even incest had its devotees.⁶⁹⁴

Births Out of Wedlock In Americas

Here is a passage quoted from *The National Vital Statistics Reports*, Vol. 66 No. 1, January 5, 2017 describing trends in marital and non-marital birth rates in United States 2005-2015:

The percentage of all births to unmarried women was 40.3% in 2015, similar to the 2014 percentage of 40.2% in 2014 the lowest levels since 2007. The percentage of all births to unmarried women peaked in 2009 at 41.0%. In 2015, **the percentage of nonmarital births varied widely among population groups, from 16.4% for API mothers to 70.6% for non-Hispanic black mothers.** The Number of nonmarital births decreased by less than 1% from 2014 (1,604,870) to 2015 (1,601,527).

As the time went on the tendency towards births out of wed-lock had constantly been increasing. Yale University Online has reported an alarming figure of **60% of the births out of wed-lock in 25 countries mostly in Latin America.** For details, we reproduce their report of March 2017 as under:

Out-of-wedlock childbirths have become more common

⁶⁹³ Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, Part V, p. 575-576.

⁶⁹⁴ Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, Part V, p. 576.

worldwide since the 1960s, but with wide variations among and within countries. Increasing economic independence and education combined with modern birth control methods have given women more control over family planning. **In about 25 countries, including China, India and much of Africa, the proportion of such births is typically around 1 percent**, explains Joseph Chamie, a demographer and a former director of the United Nations Population Division. **In another 25 countries, mostly in Latin America, more than 60 percent of births are out-of-wedlock**, a big jump from just 50 years ago. The rates of such births often coincide with public responses which range from severe punishments and stigmatization of children to celebrations and government assistance. In most countries, marriage still provides extra economic protection for parents and children, and governments struggle on how to respond to the trends. **"Marriage has become less necessary for women's financial survival**, social interaction and personal wellbeing, and government policies have been slow to keep pace." Chamie notes. "Like it or not, out-of-wedlock births are in transition worldwide and create challenges for many societies."⁶⁹⁵

The modern trend towards free sex and improved technology to avert conception and the childbirth has wrought havoc in the morality of the laity as well as the clergy in the West. Recent infidelity statistics suggest that in over 1/3 of marriages one or both of the partners admit to cheating. 22% of men say that they have cheated on their significant other. 36% of the men and women admit to having an affair with a co-worker. **As many as 35% of men and women for example admit to cheating on a partner while on a business trip.**⁶⁹⁶

The missionaries and the critics of polygamy in the West must, therefore, observe the ever-increasing futility of marriage and enormity of births out of wed-lock especially in the countries under the influence of Christianity. Whereas we observe 60% of the births out of wedlock in 25 countries of Latin America under the cultural influence of Christendom of Europe and USA, there had been about 1% of such births in 25 countries including China, India and the African countries who did not follow the religio-cultural trends of the Western Christendom. Through statistical

⁶⁹⁵ Joseph Chamie, *YaleGlobal Online*, Yale University, s.v. 'Births out-of-wedlock'. The readers can find further details in the article.

⁶⁹⁶ *Infidelity Statistics 2017*, Feb. 1, 2017, www.trustify.com.

interpolation, therefore, we can arrive at the percentage of the likely births out of wedlock in the most advanced nations by 2050.

By the grace of God Islamic populations in various nations are free from the vice of births out of wedlock. The reasons for the same are that Islam treats sex out of wedlock as a capital crime. Those who can afford to have more than one wife can marry up to four but they must contain themselves within the prescribed limits failing which prosecution may lead them to an ignoble death. The fast increasing number of bastards can be attributed mostly to decreasing sanctification of marriage, ban on polygamy, toleration of free sex, immunity from severe punishments, economic independence of women, modern birth control methods and government assistance for single mothers. The western society today accords no value to marriage, while marriage with more than one woman is treated as a cognizable offence. Hence in the countries where number of females in the marriageable age exceeds over the number of men in that category, the females are more anxious to choose a husband. As against them, the males prefer to have a longer time in the paradise where numerous women are running after them to seek a permanent attachment with them. The eagerness of women to have a husband in a society where there is no ban on premarital sex makes them easy prey to the playboys who will never like to surrender their freedom or unlimited market value among the females. Easy availability of sex out of wedlock is, therefore, the main cause for a fast decreasing trend in marriage and the increasing rate of births of the bastards in that society. Some people have also observed a decreasing inclination of women to have a husband especially in the Scandinavian countries. A thinking of absolute freedom is increasingly developing in them. Anyhow, if any woman has the desire to have children, she can have the same from men of their choice or artificial semination. Such a trend is likely to destroy the family life and the pride of any line of ancestry. Women may then be like layers in the hen having no affiliations or interest in their offspring who after losing their identity may soon be lost in the multitudes of men and women.

Surplus Women in the Western Countries

According to 1950 census, the **number of women fit to be married in United States of America exceeded by one million three thousand four hundred**. In his book '*Marriage and Morals*' (1929) Bertrand Russell had said:

There are in England some two million more women than men and these are condemned by law to remain childless which is undoubtedly to many of them a great deprivation.⁶⁹⁷

In spite of this, polygamy had always been illegal and forbidden but homosexuality is permitted and is lawful. Believers among all the revealed religions acknowledge homosexuality as a great crime and unnatural act for which the lord had inflicted the most terrific punishment i.e. by consuming the nation and their property by fire and brimstone. **It is, however, strange that in spite of their severe opposition to polygamy women in the West have raised no objection against same-sex-marriage among the males which sharply reduces the number of males to marry them.** To counteract the severe reduction of the prospective husbands, the women are becoming lesbians.

Mr. Murtada Mutahhiri has observed that:

In many matters concerned with family rights twentieth-century man has been able to deceitfully misrepresent the facts and, by deluding women with elegant expressions of equality and independence, he has evaded his responsibilities towards her and added to his own countless successes. Nevertheless, in few matters was he as successful to the degree he was in polygyny.⁶⁹⁸

Now if monogamy is made the only lawful form of marriage it will deprive millions and millions of women in the marriageable age from getting a protector, a patron and a dependable husband to look after her and her children even after her death. The unmarried women will never be able to enjoy the security, the comfort, the protection and the social status of married women. A large number of women free to hunt for some men to bear fatherless children will, therefore, infringe the basic right of women to have their own husband, house and children. There will be no question

⁶⁹⁷ Bertrand Russell, *Marriage and Morals*, (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1929), p. 252.

⁶⁹⁸ Murtada Mutrahhari, *The Rights of Women in Islam*, p. 371.

of pedigree or inter-relationships of families. Besides eradicating the pride of bloodlines, the situating may degrade women to a marketable commodity living under the fear of fifties. The chaos, as such, will be the creation of manmade law to prohibit polygamy and to replace it with virginity, celibacy, monogamy, homosexuality or the same-sex-marriage. Most of the women will then be deprived of marriage while others giving births to the bastards. Instead of lawful inheritance, therefore, the humankind might have to bequeath their assets to certain institutions or the pets left by them.

The Almighty had prohibited polyandry because no woman having plurality of husbands could guarantee the bloodline of the newborn. Male had always been bestowed with millions of spermatozoa to impregnate countless women while a woman ready to become pregnant hardly has more than one seed in her ovary. The All-knowing god had, therefore, allowed polygamy when necessary and prohibited polyandry permanently. Among many other reasons to allow polygamy was that each woman could have her own child through a husband who also had other spouses. Such children are not only legitimate but fully entitled to inherit from their fathers as well as mothers.

Anti-Climax of Human Civilization

Human beings have undoubtedly achieved great advancements in scientific discoveries and technology to attain enormous material wealth and comforts. They also have invented such atomic chemical and electronic devices with space crafts and delivery systems which can eliminate entire mankind and the material developments made by them within a few seconds. Any mental disorder of people at the helm of affairs of any of the great powers can, therefore, wipe out the entire species from the face of Earth. Nothing can, therefore, save humankind from the impending catastrophe except surrendering their will to the will of the Almighty.

The tragedy is that advancement in scientific knowledge, power and wealth had reverse effect on the human faith in the Lord God of the Universe as the sustainer of the heavens and the Earth and giver of life and death before

whom we are accountable on the Day of Judgment. The Laboratory tests and scientific studies have failed to discover any material existence of the almighty due to which the wiser people of the West do not believe in God. Why not then try to increase our happiness by enjoying full freedom to do whatever we deem fit. Fetters of marriage imposed by the Lord must, therefore, be discarded to live as we please. Monogamy, Bigamy or Polygamy are rapidly being discarded as obsolete terms in the most advanced nations of the World. Marriage is, therefore, becoming a meaningless term in the West. At the Apex of civilization, Human beings will be living under a new system for which we can coin the term "*Nonogamy*". Subsequently, by removal of entire embargo on free sex, we may succeed to establish perfect secularism by converting the earth to the "Animal Planet" in the real sense.

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